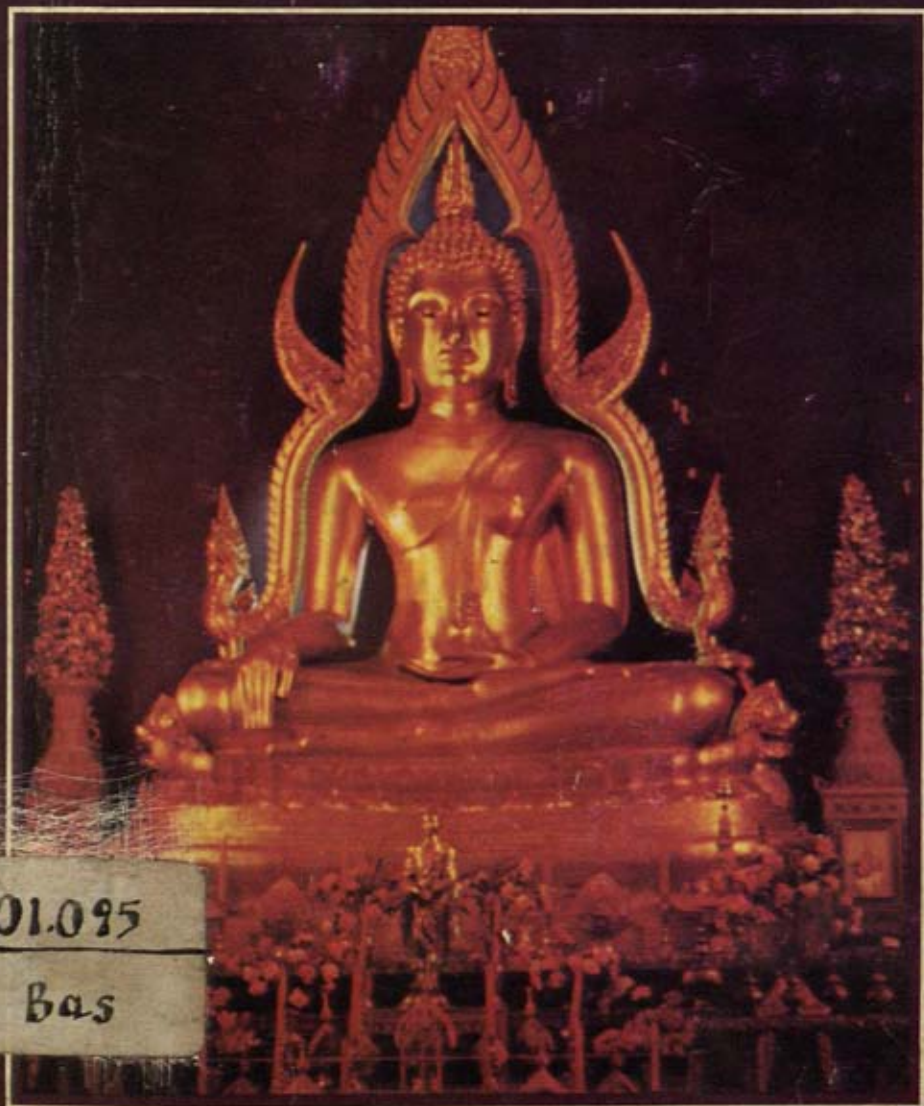


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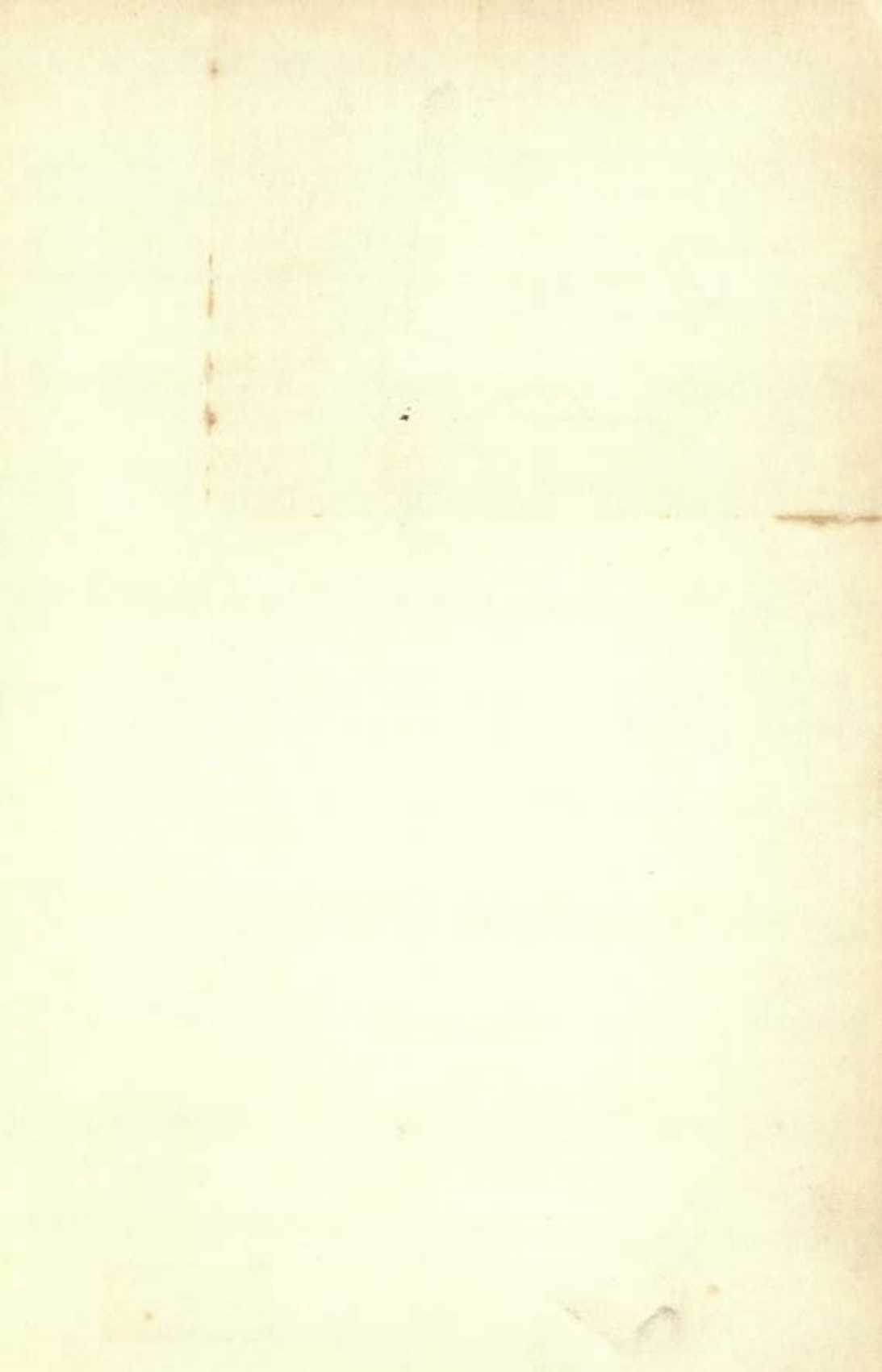
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# The Civilizations of Monsoon Asia





# The Civilizations of Monsoon Asia

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## PREFACE

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This book was originally intended to help pupils in high schools develop a knowledge of Monsoon Asia. The contributors, all either members of the staff of the Australian National University, Canberra, or otherwise associated with that University, have attempted to explain, succinctly and simply, the salient features of the history and cultures of Monsoon Asia so that students may know something about these immensely important factors in the modern world.

The contributors and the editor hope that this study of five of the most important regions of Asia will be more than a textbook. For many reasons, some of which are given in Chapter 1 it is essential for the welfare of civilization as a whole that that part of the world which inherits the culture of Europe should know more about Asia, and we hope that this book will be of some interest to readers of all ages and nationalities, and help those who have been brought up in the Western tradition to understand a little about other civilizations, and even perhaps help Asians to understand other Asians of different cultural backgrounds.

Though this book was written primarily with Australian readers in mind it is, we hope, in no sense parochial. In different ways and with different emphases its authors try to relate the cultural history of their respective regions to the culture and history of the rest of the world. Our chapters will no doubt help the reader better to follow contemporary Asian political and social problems, but they are primarily intended to help him to understand and appreciate the cultures of the peoples of Asia and to know where their attitudes and values differ from those of the West and from one another's. In such a small compass it is impossible to do more than barely scratch a diminutive portion of the surface of the great civilizations described here. If, among their readers, even a few are stimulated to go on to some of the more detailed books mentioned in the bibliography, the authors will be very satisfied.

One of the main problems facing the reader who takes up a book on Asian civilizations is the plethora of unusual words which he has to cope with right from the start. To help him we have made the index also serve as a glossary, and definitions of many of the Asian words used in the book will be found there. The day may come when serious mis-

pronunciation of a well known Asian name or word is looked on as a sign of ignorance and lack of education. But at present ignorance prevails nearly everywhere, and even television announcers and schoolteachers rarely make any effort to arrive at the approximately correct pronunciation of an Asian name. At the end of each chapter the reader will find a few notes on pronunciation, and we urge him to read them carefully.

We wish to thank Mrs Jocelyn Bergin, for very efficient secretarial assistance, Miss Mary Hutchinson, for preparing the index and other invaluable help, and the Visual Aids Department of the Australian National University, for assistance with the preparation of the illustrations. Many of the plates are taken from copyright photographs and we are grateful to the owners of the copyrights, who are mentioned in the list on p. xi, for permission to use their pictures. Finally we would thank the publishers for their enthusiastic support of this modest survey of the civilizations of Australia's nearest neighbours.

A. L. BASHAM

Canberra, 1973

1

# Introduction

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A.L.BASHAM







The days are past when it is necessary to explain in the introduction to a book like this just why we should try to understand Asia, and why Asia is so important. Asia contains about half the population of the earth, and about a third of its total land surface — these are surely reasons enough, without further argument. People who do not want to understand at least a little about Asia will not be likely to open this book anyhow, so the really important question is not *why* we should understand Asia, but *how* we should understand Asia.

In classical times the word Asia was first used to mean a limited area of what is now Turkey. As geographical knowledge widened it came to include an immense and indeterminate region lying to the east of Asia Minor. Nowadays it is universally accepted as implying the whole land mass east of the Ural Mountains, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, together with nearby islands such as Japan, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka. In the early nineteenth century there was some doubt as to whether Australia should be included for geographical purposes in Asia, but owing to its size it came to be regarded as a separate continent.

From the geographical point of view the most significant feature of Asia is the immense and very high tableland which forms its centre. As this area grows warmer in spring the air above it rises and is replaced by winds blowing from the oceans to the south and east. These winds bring heavy clouds of water vapour from the ocean and most of this is released before it reaches the mountains. Thus it happens that some of the most populous parts of Asia receive much of their rainfall within a period of about three months of the year in the spring and summer, from May to September, the exact time varying somewhat according to region. This periodic rainfall is known as the monsoon, a word borrowed from the Arabs.

To support a large population in a monsoon area and to carry on agriculture throughout the year it is necessary to conserve the surplus rainfall of the monsoon and use it judiciously for watering the crops in the drier months. So, many of the peoples of Asia are dependent on conserved water, and for thousands of years one of the main functions of their rulers has been to promote and control irrigation. Some parts of



Asia affected by the monsoon have developed political systems largely based on this overriding necessity.

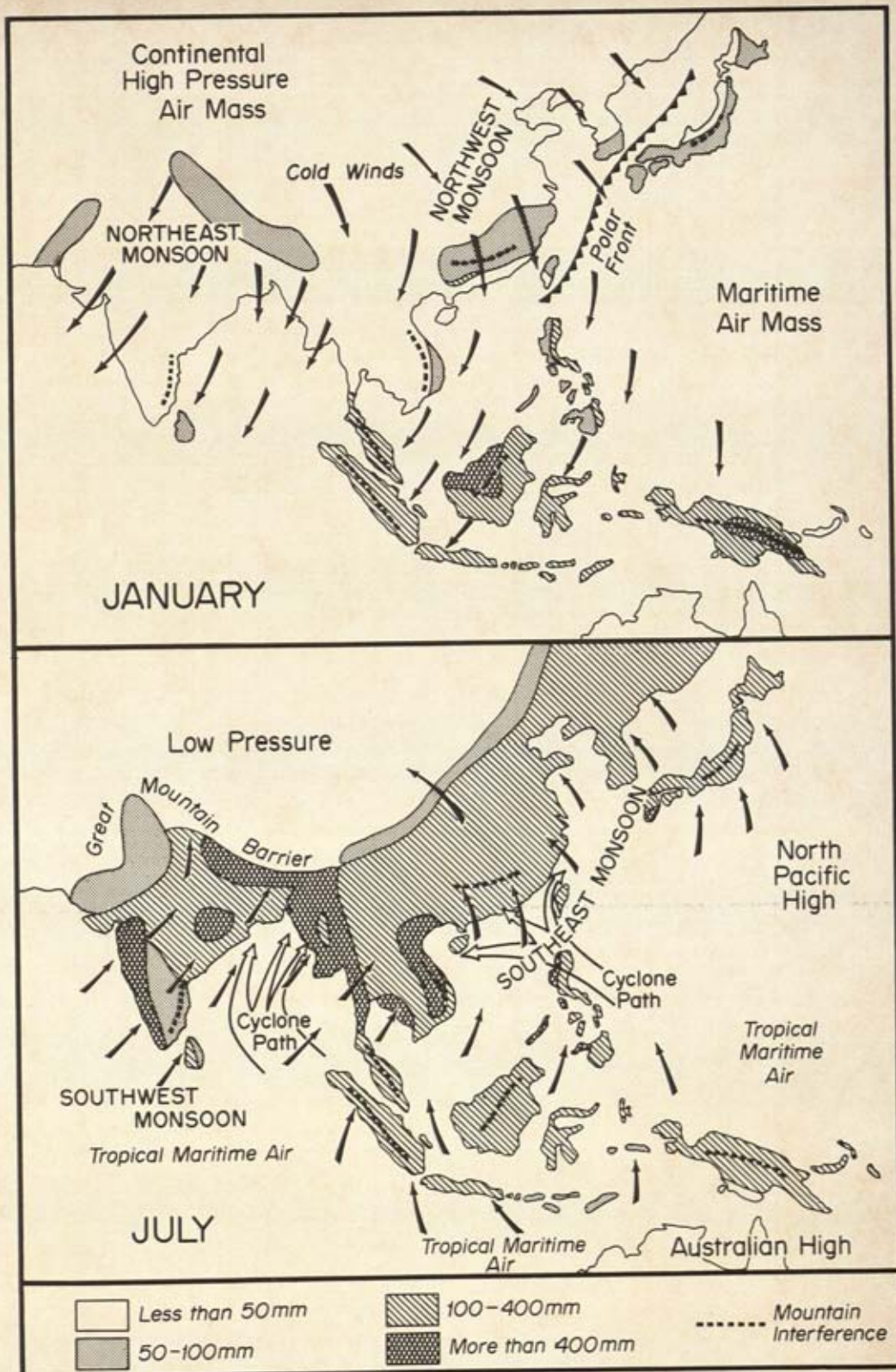
A point which we must always bear in mind is that the division between Asia and the rest of the world is based essentially on practical convenience and nothing else. Europe is not sharply separated from Asia. The Ural Mountains, which divide European Russia from Siberia and Soviet Central Asia, are mostly low hills, and they have never prevented large hordes of people from travelling from Asia to Europe or in the reverse direction. Indo-Europeans, Scythians, Huns, Tatars and other nomads found their way to Europe by this means. Later, bands of Russian peasants colonized Siberia, and the armies of the Tsars expanded Russian imperial power by the same routes. West of the Urals is the Russian plain and Western Europe which, looked at from the East, seem to form merely an appendage to Asia, a sub-continent like the Indian sub-continent.

As with the Urals, the narrow straits between Asia and the Balkans have never really divided the two continents, and from long before history men were migrating from Asia and settling in Europe by way of the eastern Mediterranean. Archaeology has shown that even in Palaeolithic times cowrie shells from the Red Sea found their way to Western Europe, and so even then there was remote and indirect contact between Asia and the West.

The point of all this is that we have thought too long along lines of 'them' and 'us', 'us' being the many people of the world who live in Europe, or whose ancestors came from Europe. Until recently there was a widespread idea that 'we' were progressive, practical, industrious, inventive, while 'they' were conservative, other-worldly, inclined to thought rather than action, backward-looking. This generalization may have been partly true of some parts of Asia and some parts of the areas of European expansion in the nineteenth century, but it is in no sense true now and neither was it true in the earlier past. For though Asia may be a convenient term from the point of view of geography, when we look at it in the perspective of the past it is almost meaningless except in relation to a very short period of recent history. In earlier times there was no polarity of 'them' and 'us', of Asia and Europe.

There is not, and never has been, such a thing as Asian civilization. For that reason the university department with which most of the contributors to this volume are connected changed its name some years ago, and became the Department of Asian Civilizations, in the plural. The culture of the world has always been one in essence, and no civilization has grown up entirely in a vacuum, without contact with other cultures. The idea put forward by certain philosophical historians or historical philosophers that it is possible to identify a discrete civilization as one would a living organism, as coming into being, having a period of individual life, and then growing old and dying, is based on a false analogy. No





Climatic map of Monsoon Asia.



civilization ever dies, or ever will die, unless ultimately all human life disappears from the earth. Even now in the twentieth century we make use of the inventions of unknown men in the earliest civilization of Mesopotamia—the wheel and the hafted axe for instance—and we think some of the thoughts that they thought. For instance in the earliest code of law known to us, the laws of Urukagina, the ruler of the Sumerian city of Lagash in about 2400 B.C., we read: 'If a villein makes a fishpond, no gentleman has the right to take away his fish'. *Mutatis mutandis*, our own legislators still claim to defend the rights of the poor and weak against the rich and powerful, and in this they share the views of some of the more benevolent kings of the most ancient civilizations. Those civilizations have not died; they have only changed and developed into something else.

If civilizations are not born and so do not die, if they have no real boundaries in time, equally they have no sharp boundaries in space. There never was a culture so cut off from the rest of the world that it did not blend into another culture on its frontiers. Even the many ancient cultures of the Americas, some civilized and some not so, were linked with those of Asia and the rest of the world in a slight measure. Somehow objects from China found their way to America and their style of ornamentation was copied—the resemblances are so striking that they just cannot be due to chance. How the transfer took place we cannot say, but in some way or other it happened; and some scholars would suggest many more borrowings by early America from Asia.

Thus no civilization is a discrete individual with hard and fast boundaries. It merges with its neighbours on its edges, so to speak. It is perhaps more appropriate not to think of European civilization, Islamic civilization, Chinese civilization and so on, but rather to think of centres or foci of civilization in different parts of the world, giving rise to regional variations. Over about 4500 years of recorded history there have been four great centres in the world, from which cultures have spread, and which in earlier days were looked to as the main sources of wisdom, learning and beauty by the people living on their borders. These centres are, from East to West: China, India, Western Asia, especially Mesopotamia, and the Mediterranean, especially Greece and Italy.

It was in West Asia, in lower Mesopotamia, that there appeared the earliest civilization, in the sense of men living in cities with an organized government. Thence civilization spread to Egypt, Crete, Iran, Turkey, and the Caucasus, and this wide area for many centuries formed the cultural centre of the world. Then, in the sixth century B.C., the Mediterranean area became the most vital and progressive, and it held that position for several centuries. In the fourth century A.D., India was the most civilized part of the world, and three centuries or so later it was China. From the ninth century onwards the greatest centre of civilization was once more Western Asia, with the sudden development of Arab culture, fertilized by



the new religion of Islam and contact with Byzantium. Then from the fifteenth century onwards the ball was tossed back to Europe, and there it remained until recent years.

Looked at like this, from the point of view of history rather than geography, the distinction between Asia and Europe becomes blurred. It is only something that has arisen since, towards the end of the fifteenth century, Europeans began to make certain advances in science and invention which gave them a great technological advantage over the rest of the world, an advantage which they were quick to exploit.

In earlier times, before the Renaissance in Europe, the cultures of the four great foci of civilization were more or less equally different. An educated Indian of say the twelfth century A.D. would have felt very much a foreigner in China; only the decaying Buddhist monasteries and temples might have reminded him of his homeland. The Chinese way of life and system of government, with its rigid state control, would have seemed extremely strange to him. He would have felt equally strange in the Islamic world, with its strictly codified and exclusive religion, and its austere mosques without any of the gaily coloured images to which he was used in his homeland. But perhaps if he had been transported to western Europe and had managed to learn to talk to the people of the times, he would have felt nearer to the way of life that he knew. For he would have found tall temples containing images which were worshipped by the populace. He would have watched rituals which would remind him of those of Hinduism. And as he travelled over the countryside he would have seen on every hill a fortress in which dwelt a local chief who owed allegiance to a greater king, controlled his territory through a band of armed men, and maintained himself by taxes levied from the peasantry, chiefly in kind—very like the sort of system our Indian was used to at home.

Similarly a cultured official of the Roman Empire, if he could have travelled in time as well as in space, might well have found more in common with the civilization of T'ang China than with that of any other region or period. Once he had learnt to speak Chinese he might have felt at home with the mandarin, a member of a rigid hierarchy of power, who, when not engaged in his official duties, whiled away his time at drinking parties or in composing and reciting poetry. Conditions in India or mediaeval Europe would have seemed to the Roman distasteful by comparison, disorderly and undisciplined, where too much time was spent on religious and philosophical matters and nobody cared sufficiently for the welfare of the state.

It is common knowledge that the world's great religions, without exception, began in Asia. One of them (or perhaps two if we include Judaism) was taken to Europe and there, in the magnificent structure of the Roman church, it achieved an organization unique in the history of religions anywhere. Christianity is looked on as a particularly European



religion, but in fact its doctrines are firmly rooted in the Hebrew tradition, fertilized by ideas from Iran and a few from Greece. It was only with the elaboration of church law and theology that European influence made itself felt. Christianity is one of a group of religions the origins of which can be traced back to the beliefs of the ancient Semitic peoples, through early Judaism as it existed at the time of Christ. Other religions of this group are later Judaism and Islam. Resembling these is Zoroastrianism, the ancient religion of Iran, which is unimportant nowadays but had much influence on other religions in earlier times.

There is another group of religions which owe their origin to India. These are based partly on the ideas and practices of the ancient peasant communities of the Ganga Valley, and partly on the thoughts and mystical revelations of sages from the seventh century B.C. onwards. Their parent is the earliest form of Hinduism, now the religion of the great majority of Indians. Out of that Hinduism developed Buddhism, the world's oldest missionary religion, which spread to China, Japan, Tibet, and most of South-east Asia, though it almost died in the land of its birth, and yielded to Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia. Two other religions, Jainism and Sikhism, are also linked with the Indian religious tradition. The ancient religions of China and Japan, Confucianism, Taoism, and Shinto, have been to a considerable extent influenced by Buddhism and may for practical purposes be included in this group, though they did not originate in India.

Between these two groups of religions, which have helped to form all the surviving civilizations of the world, there are certain important differences. For one thing the religions of the Hebrew tradition—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—are exclusive. If you are a member of one you cannot belong to another. Nowadays some teachers of these faiths are modifying their outlook, but in the past the doctrines of each of these religions have been governed by the command which Jehovah is said to have given to Moses on Mount Sinai: 'Thou shalt have none other gods but me'. As a contrast we may cite the words said to have been spoken by the incarnate god Krishna to the hero Arjuna in the great Hindu religious poem, the *Bhagavad Gītā*: 'Whatever god you may worship, I answer your prayer'. This is an inclusive attitude, very different from the Western one. Every religion, says Krishna in as many words, is looking in the same direction, and receives the blessing of the one God who is the source of all things.

There are other differences too. The religions of the Western group teach that man has an immortal soul. That soul is born in a human body once and once only, and on the death of the body the soul goes on to a changeless condition, either of bliss or of suffering, and it never returns. The Eastern religions, on the other hand, teach transmigration, maintaining that the life passes from body to body, whether in the heavens or on earth or in purgatories of intense pain. The traditional Western teaching gives



the soul one chance only for the whole of eternity. According to the Eastern religions, there is always another chance until at last, after immense striving, the being may succeed in reaching a state where there is no more transmigration but only final bliss, sometimes conceived of as involving complete loss of personality. A corollary of the doctrine of transmigration is that all creatures, from the highest god to the meanest insect, are linked together in a great chain of being. The soul now inhabiting a worm may once have been that of a man, and *vice versa*. Though there have been a few exceptions, the theologians of the Western religions have generally rejected transmigration and have maintained that immortality is reserved for humans, and when an animal is dead it is done for. We must bear this striking difference in mind when we think of the Hindu and Buddhist tendency to non-violence and vegetarianism, for from their point of view meat eating is theoretically little better than cannibalism.

Another striking difference in the traditional doctrines of the two groups of religions is concerned with their cosmologies, their ideas of time and the universe. For the Western religions the cosmos is simple. A picture of the universe was worked out by the geographer Ptolemy in the second century A.D., and this fitted well with the concepts of Judaism and Christianity, and so was adopted as orthodox. Later, Islam also accepted it with few modifications. Slowly over the sixteenth century the Ptolemaic world view was given up in Europe, after it had been undermined by astronomers such as Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo. But it has influenced the whole tradition of the Western world and its effects are to be seen even today. The Ptolemaic universe was very simple. In its centre was earth, the abode of man; around earth revolved sun, moon and planets; beyond them, set in the empyrean, were the fixed stars, beyond which was the highest heaven. It was a safe, comfortable little cosmos, with earth at the centre of all things and man enjoying a special position on earth.

Moreover, if the traditional Western cosmos was comprehensible in volume it was also comprehensible in duration. According to the best calculations, based on the genealogies in the Old Testament, it had been created by God out of nothing in the year 4004 B.C. and it would come to an end in the near future.

The Eastern religions, on the other hand, conceived of a universe of immense or infinite extent, in which the earth was only a comparatively minor element, and which went through tremendously long cycles of development and decline through all eternity. The universe of Hinduism and Buddhism comes closer than does that of Ptolemy to the world of modern science, the cold impersonal cosmos containing distances so great that the mind can hardly visualize them and durations so long that thought can hardly conceive them.

Let us bear these differences too in mind when we think about Asia, and let us remember that they are not differences between the outlooks



and world views of Asia and Europe, but are differences *within Asia itself*. Both pictures of the universe began in Asia and, until the religion of Islam spread eastwards from the eleventh century onwards, the dividing line between the two was roughly the boundary of the regions covered in this book. Monsoon Asia generally held the Indian world-view, and Western and Central Asia the Semitic. Since then the Western world-view has spread in the East, through the expansion of Islam in the South Asian sub-continent and Indonesia, and through many conversions to Christianity. Now the two different views of the universe are steadily giving way to that of modern science, which rejects many of the fundamental presuppositions of both.

So we have some justification in grouping together the countries of Monsoon Asia. Their peoples, over the millennia, have had to cope with similar climatic and agricultural problems in order to maintain large populations. Their attitudes have been conditioned by certain similar beliefs about the nature of life and the character of the cosmos. They have evolved two very ancient civilizations in India and China, and these have stimulated the development of other cultures in Japan, Korea, Tibet, Mongolia and the many lands of South-east Asia. We must not imagine that these latter cultures are mere imitations of the two older ones. As the following chapters will show, the peoples of these regions had already developed considerable cultures of their own, long before they felt the full impact of Chinese or Indian civilization. They always retained their cultural individuality, as they still retain it, and whatever they borrowed has been transmuted and adapted according to their own genius.

The spread of change is so fast nowadays that it is hard to forecast what is going to happen to the world's cultures. At one time it seemed that 'Western' technological culture would gain complete ascendancy over the whole world, and that the cultures of Asia would gradually become merely matters of history. Now this seems more doubtful. Of course technology, industrialization, and the scientific attitude are rapidly gaining ground in Asia, but certain features of the traditional cultures are showing remarkable powers of survival, and are even beginning to influence 'Western' civilization.

Features of Indian culture are clearly affecting 'the West'—yoga, for instance, and the music of the *sitār*. Japan has contributed Zen Buddhism, and from the days of Whistler has had a subtle effect on 'Western' art. Now the influence of Japan is even felt in such aspects of life as landscape gardening and flower arrangement, and she has given her traditional methods of self-defence, *judo* and *karate*, to the world at large. Chinese restaurants are found in every city of Western Europe, America, and Australia, and in most parts of Asia also. Indonesia has produced the batik textile designs which are now popular everywhere. In fact Western civilization is returning to the situation which existed before the nineteenth



century, and is borrowing as well as lending. If a single world culture arises out of the technological revolution, it will be a culture drawing its elements not only from one region of the world, but from all parts of it.

Typical of the future, perhaps, are international airports. These splendid architectural complexes have a rather depressing sameness, when viewed from the runways. In any part of the world you will find the same general pattern and style, with only slight variations. But the airport shops which cater for departing passengers vary from one airport to another. While such internationally popular articles as duty-free Swiss watches and Japanese cameras are always in evidence, each airport contains shops which sell the products of the local culture, perhaps not always in the best of taste, but at least conveying something of the national feeling and national spirit to the rest of the world; and the designer of the passenger lounge of every international airport will try to convey something of the national tradition in the upholstery, the decorations and the hangings. This, perhaps, is the picture of the world as it is becoming, at a pace more rapid every year as communications become quicker, easier and cheaper. Externally there is a sameness more and more approaching uniformity; but look within and there are striking differences.

Nothing is eternal. One of the first lessons a student of Asian thought will learn is that everything material is constantly passing away, and if we try to dam the stream of time we do so to our own disadvantage. The myth of the 'changeless East' is one which arose in the nineteenth century. In those days the tempo of change in many parts of Asia was so slow that it perhaps really did seem changeless to a superficial observer. But it is clear that great changes have taken place in the past in Asia, and nowadays Asia is changing as never before. It is in the past that the present and future are rooted, and only by looking to the past can we understand what is now happening and what will happen. The authors of this book hope that it may form the first step towards deeper understanding and more realistic appreciation of the life of Asia, and of what it has to offer to the world of the future.



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# South Asia

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S.A.A.RIZVI





## GEOGRAPHY

### THE LAND

India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Ceylon (which in 1972 was officially renamed Sri Lanka) constitute the southern peninsula of the Asian continent. Before the middle of August 1947, India and Pakistan, under British rule, formed one nation. For the purposes of this study, all references to India before 1947 include Pakistan and Nepal.

The Himalayas with their lofty snow-clad peaks, in the north of India and Pakistan, separate the sub-continent from the rest of Asia. Tapering southwards to the Indian Ocean, it is like a triangle with its apex pointing to the equator. Just beyond the apex, separated by a narrow strait, lies the pear-shaped island of Ceylon.

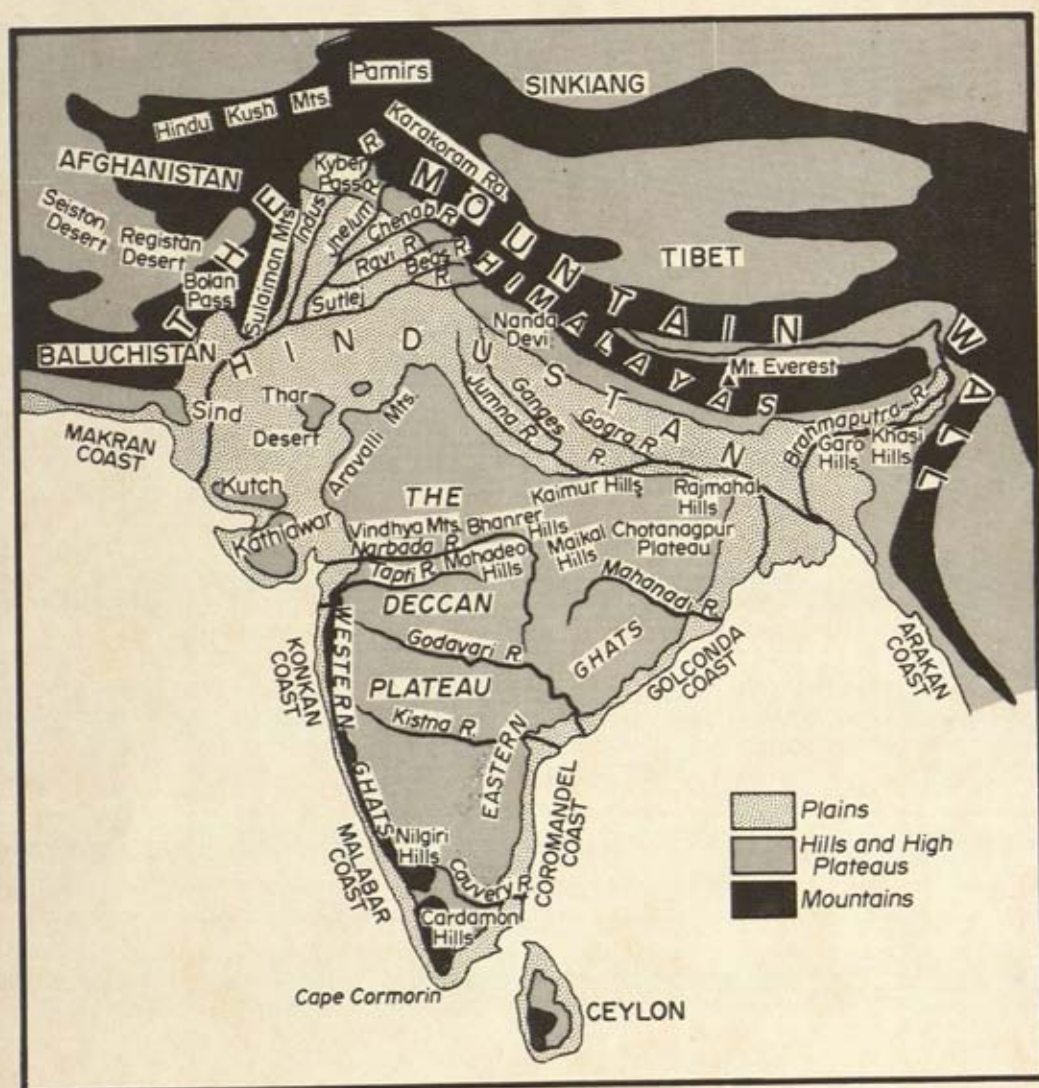
### PHYSICAL DIVISIONS

Looking at its physical features, the sub-continent can be divided into four distinct regions.

1. The Himalayas form the great northern wall. The most famous peak is Mt Everest, 29 140 feet high (or nearly nine km), whose summit was reached for the first time in June 1953; but it is in Nepal. The Khyber Pass in the north-west was regarded as the gateway of India. It admits visitors from Afghanistan and Central Asia to Peshawar in Pakistan. Descending from the crests of the Himalayas, we find, from west to east, the mountainous territories of Kashmir, Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan, which developed more or less in isolation from the plains below.

2. The Great Northern Plains stretch like a horseshoe from the Arabian Sea to the Bay of Bengal. These are watered by three distinct river-systems. One of these is the Indus and its tributaries, and another is the Brahmaputra, a trough on the side of the great Himalayan wall. The third river-system of northern India drains the southern Himalayan slopes, and eventually unites into the mighty stream of the Ganges, or Mother Ganga as she is called by the Hindus. The tongue of land where the Ganges unites with her great sister river, the Jumna, is called *Prayāg* (near Allahabad).





Physical features of the Indian sub-continent.

Every part of her course is hallowed by some legend from the sacred mythology. Every year she is visited by countless pilgrims. The tract between the Ganges and the Jumna, called the Gangetic *doāb* (land between the rivers) is one of the most densely populated parts of India.

The tributaries of the Indus flow in a south-westerly direction forming the flat plains of the Punjab. Attracted by the fertility of this area, wave



after wave of tribes from Central Asia and Persia have invaded the country. They first settled in the Punjab and subsequently moved on to the Gangetic plains. These plains have generally been the seats of ambitious rulers.

3. The Central Highlands separate the Great Plains of north India from the plateaux and coastal plains of the Deccan in the south. This central region is hilly and covered by forests, and has become the homeland of a large number of hill tribes such as Gonds, Bhils, etc. The nature of the land enabled tribes and clans who had been dislodged from the Great Plains to establish independent kingdoms in isolated hilly and inaccessible regions.

4. The southernmost physiographic division of the Deccan, facing the Bay of Bengal in the east and the Arabian Sea in the west, is known as the Peninsular Plateau. The two sides of the triangular southern tableland are called the Eastern and the Western Ghats. The Eastern Ghats stretch in fragmented spurs and ranges down to Madras. The Western Ghats form a great rampart south of Bombay, with only a narrow strip of land between them and the coast.

The inner triangular plateau is dotted with peaks, and is approached by several famous passes from the coastal plain on the western side. In the east, the country is comparatively open and accessible to the spread of civilization. The inhabitants of the inaccessible western tracts remained apart from the civilization which developed on the eastern coast. The rainfall on the west coast, unlike the east and the inner plateau, is bountiful.

The two coastal regions of India meet at Cape Comorin. To its south lies the island of Ceylon. The up-country, or highlands, occupying one-fifth of the area of Ceylon, is a central mountain massif resembling a natural fortress. It slopes down to wide coastal plains on all sides. There are many inlets along the coast, but only a few good harbours.

#### CLIMATE

Seasonal alterations in the weather pattern are brought about by the monsoons, which are mainly responsible for climatic changes in South Asia. The south-west monsoon season lasts from June to September. The season following in its wake from October to November marks the beginning of the cooler weather, which by December extends across the whole of the sub-continent, except for the extreme south-east of the peninsula. The hot weather season begins again in March. The timely distribution of monsoon rains determines the sub-continent's agricultural pattern.

The temperature and the rainfall in the sub-continent vary from region to region. Assam in the east is extremely wet; the annual rainfall at Cherrapunji on the Shillong plateau is 10 820 mm. Rajasthan is extremely dry, the annual rainfall being less than 102 mm. Punjab experiences fierce summer heat, alternating with winter cold, sometimes down to freezing



point, while the warmth in Kerala hardly varies and its air is uniformly moist.

The rainfall is erratic and has come to be known as the 'annual gamble'. A normal rainfall is a great boon to the cultivators, as their livelihood and prosperity depend on it. If it is scanty, all the irrigation channels dry up, rivers fall, wells are without water. Drought is always accompanied by scarcity, misery, and distress, and unbalances the country's economy. Excessive rainfall causes floods which sweep off cattle, stores of grain, and thatched cottages, rendering the poor cultivators homeless.

Ceylon is divided into three climatic zones. The dry zone, the largest of the three, receives rains only in the north-east monsoon (October to April) while during the south-west monsoon (May to September) it suffers a period of drought. It was the cradle of Sinhalese civilization and includes the ancient cities of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa.

The wet coastal zone gets the rains of both the south-west and the north-east monsoon. The port of Colombo is situated in this zone. The mountainous zone in the south of central Ceylon, known as 'the up-country', is a cool and healthy region, endowed with luxuriant natural vegetation and striking scenic attractions. The rainfall is not erratic.

#### CROPS

Throughout the river plains of the sub-continent, two harvests, and in some provinces three, are reaped each year. One-third of the population in the sub-continent eats mainly rice, though its production is limited to the low-lying districts of northern India, the river valleys and deltas, and the southern coastal strips.

Wheat generally does not thrive in places which are eminently suited to the cultivation of rice. The Punjab and Uttar Pradesh are the great wheat-growing areas of India. Another staple grain of the sub-continent is millet; oil-producing seeds, sugar-cane, tobacco, and vegetables also form important crops in all parts of the sub-continent.

Turmeric and chillies are widely cultivated, while the pepper vine is confined to the Malabar coast. Betel-leaf is grown in most parts of the country. Tea was first cultivated in Assam but its production has now been extended to many hilly regions, and it is also widely grown in Ceylon. Coffee is grown in the hilly regions of southern India and in Ceylon. Special attention is paid to the cultivation and improvement of cotton. The highlands of the Deccan, the deep valleys of the Central Provinces (Madhya Pradesh) and the plains of Gujarat produce a very superior variety of cotton. Jute, the next big fibre crop, is cultivated in northern and eastern Bengal.



## CYCLE OF HISTORY

### THE EARLY CULTURES

Modern discoveries show that human activity in the sub-continent goes back as far as a period between 400 000 and 200 000 B.C. The earliest known variety of stone tool was discovered on the banks of the Soan, a tributary of the Indus. For several thousand years, men wandered through river valleys and open forests, some of them living in caves and rock shelters near rivers. They were hunters and food gatherers. These were Palaeolithic men.

About 6000 B.C. man seems to have learnt the art of growing food crops and taming domestic animals. Palaeolithic man developed the skill of polishing stone tools for cutting and for dressing wood, and entered the Neolithic age. Traces of this Neolithic culture are mostly seen in the north-west of the sub-continent and in the Deccan. The people learnt to make coarse hand-made pottery.

From the end of the fourth millennium B.C. people in Baluchistan and lower Sind began to live in small villages. They built their houses of mud brick and painted their pottery with pleasant patterns. They had learnt the use of copper. They may have been a dark-skinned people who spoke a tongue akin to the Brahui of Baluchistan, which is identified as a Dravidian language. It is suggested that the merchants of Baluchistan went by sea to settle in Sumer (Mesopotamia) as there is some similarity in the pottery of the two places. It is also suggested that these people consisted of a Proto-Australoid element, which at one time may have covered the whole of India, overlaid by a Mediterranean one, which entered India at a very early period, bringing with it the elements of civilization and the Dravidian family of languages.

### THE HARAPPA CITY CULTURE

In 1921 excavation at the site of Harappa on the left bank of the Ravi, and in the next year at Mohenjo-daro on the right bank of the Indus, began to lay bare the remains of the urban civilization of the Indus Valley, named by the archaeologists the 'Harappa city culture'. Experts are agreed that it extended from c. 2250 to 1750 B.C. as a minimum. Further excavations in India reveal that it extended for about 1500 miles (or 2400 km) from north to south. Finds from the excavations show considerable uniformity in the technique of making pottery and in the construction of baked bricks. Some settlements seem to have been mere villages, and others small towns, with Mohenjo-daro and Harappa as capitals.

Many features of the Indus Valley civilization such as art motifs and the use of seals, are similar to those of the contemporary Mesopotamian or Iranian cultures. In fact, the urban culture of those days was very widespread.

The people of the Harappan culture planned their cities, houses and roads systematically and developed a sanitary system, including bathrooms and drains. The city was divided into square or rectangular blocks. The roads were built on the New York or Melbourne pattern of the right-angle grid.

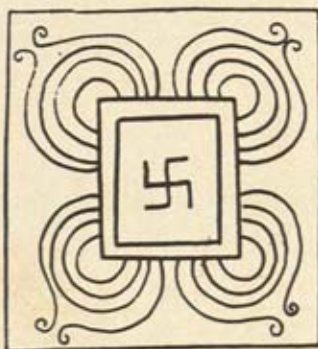
The farmers used light ploughs and depended upon flood irrigation for their agriculture. The wheel was used in the making of pottery. Human and animal figurines of terra-cotta (baked red clay) have been found in great quantity. A bronze figure of a dancing girl found at Mohenjo-daro, only four and a half inches (c. 11 cm) high, is really exquisite.

The jewellery found in hoards at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa is made of gold and silver. Girdles, necklaces, rings and bangles were very popular. The poor people seem to have used pottery bangles. Men and women both used hairpins.

Bullock carts were the chief means of communication and many toy carts made of pottery have been found. Cotton textiles and ivory objects such as combs were exported to Mesopotamia, in exchange for gold and silver and other commodities.

The mother goddess was the principal divinity of these people. Some of the other characteristics of the religion of the Harappa culture were later assimilated into Hinduism. Various animals, such as the bull, which Hindus later worshipped, are also seen on Indus Valley objects. The swastika, the emblem of well-being revered by the Hindus, was known to the Indus Valley people; and phallic worship was not uncommon in these times.

Amongst the most puzzling remains of the Harappa culture are seals. About 1200 seals have been found at Mohenjo-daro alone. They are made of soft white limestone and are small and flat, rectangular or square, and



The swastika, still used today in the ritual decorations (Rangoli) drawn on the ground by the women of the household using a mixture of powdered rice (or some other white substance) and water. In the south the swastika is the emblem used on Wednesdays.



on one side is a pictorial motif, accompanied by a line or two of pictographic writing, which has hitherto defied all attempts to read it. The use of similar seals is also found in ancient Mesopotamian and Iranian cultures. It is suggested that the seals were the tokens of merchants and were primarily used to mark the ownership of property. They seem to have been carried on the persons of their owners.



Indus Valley seal (obverse and reverse).

The extinction of the flourishing material culture of the Indus Valley is puzzling. Perhaps the semi-nomadic Aryans, who in about 1500 B.C. captured the north-western part of India, began to penetrate into the Indus Valley towns. They appear to have co-existed with the local people for some time, but in a state of perpetual tension, and when their numbers grew great enough they conquered the Indus Valley towns. Before long the Harappans moved to the safer regions in the hills and in the Deccan where they found a peaceful life in small settlements of their own.

However, some archaeologists have recently suggested that the Harappan culture declined because of continual flooding of the Indus, and that the people had moved south and east well before the Aryans came. But in this case, it is unlikely that the cities would have been completely evacuated, and people who continued to live there would have come in conflict with the Aryans, who appear to have met with quite stiff resistance.

#### THE ARYANS

The *Āryās*, anglicized as Aryans, were the Indo-European people who ranged over the steppes of Eastern Europe and Central Asia and who, some time before 1500 B.C., settled in Bactria and the northern Iranian plateau. They were a fair-complexioned people practising a little agriculture. Cattle formed their main wealth; the horse which they harnessed to their chariots endowed them with superiority over the Indus Valley people who moved in bullock carts. They enslaved the latter, and other aborigines, and named them *dāsas* (slaves). In the earlier stages they married *dāsa* women, but soon became alarmed at the consequences of the inter-mixing of colour.

By about 1000 B.C. the Aryans were stratified into three classes.

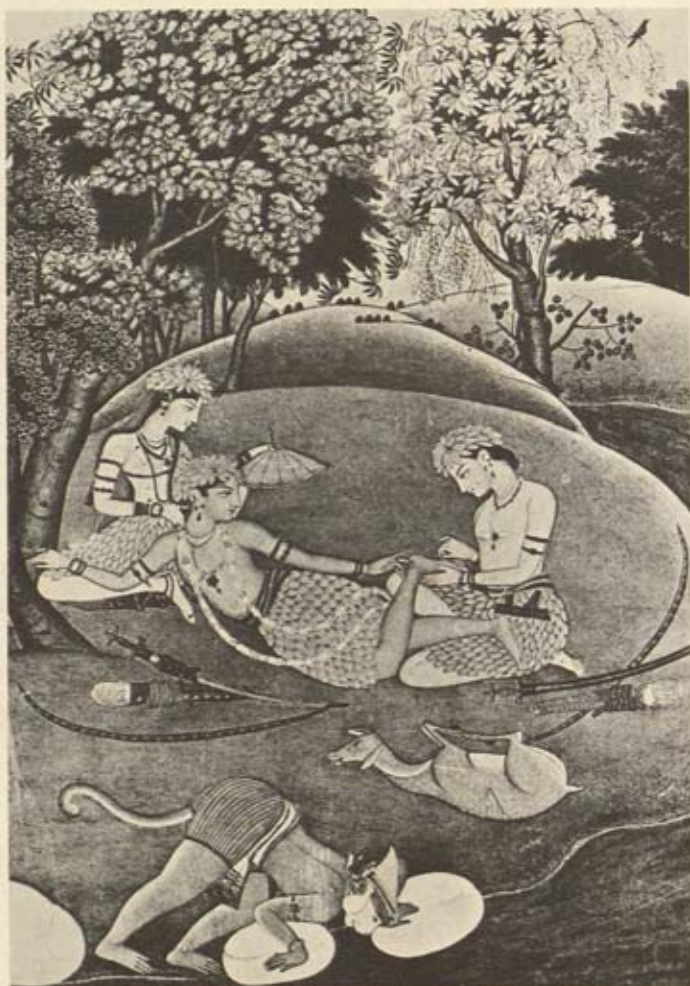
1. The priests were called *brāhmaṇa*, anglicized as brahmins.

2. The warriors and their chiefs were known as *rajanya* and subsequently as *kshatriyas*.

3. The rest, who were cattle-breeders, agriculturalists, and artisans, were known as *vaiśyas*.

The enslaved people were relegated to a fourth class known as the *śūdras*, or serving class.

The Aryans spoke an archaic form of Sanskrit. Many generations of their priests composed hymns and other religious texts in Sanskrit over a



Scene from the *Rāmāyana* showing Rāma, Sītā, Lakshmana and Hanumān in the forest. Kangra-style painting, c. 1780.



period of a thousand years. Their work is collectively known as *Vedas* (knowledge or wisdom). There are four Vedas of which the earliest and most important is the *Rig-Veda*, comprising 1028 hymns.

The family constituted the basic unit of Aryan society. The father, or the oldest male member of the family, was its head and the entire system was patriarchal. A number of related families formed a *grāma* (clan) a term which came to be used for village. Houses were built on a wooden framework, the family and animals living together under the same roof.

The clothes of men and women hardly differed. A lower garment and an upper garment, unstitched, formed the main dress.

The king protected the tribe and the tribal territory. The priests advised the rulers, and used their spells and charms to ensure victory for their patrons. A popular assembly called *samiti*, representing princes and people, looked after the needs of the tribe. Another body, known as *sabhā* and composed of the elder men, may have been a village assembly.

The migration of the Aryan tribes was a long drawn-out process. By about 900 B.C. they had thrust eastwards from the Punjab into the fertile and strategically important Gangetic *doāb*. Wherever they settled, they tried to impose their own social and religious system upon the indigenous people; in other words they Aryanized the local culture.

About 900 B.C. iron, knowledge of which was spreading slowly at the time, began to be used in India, along with bronze. It was stronger than bronze and cheaper to manufacture. This gave a new dimension to the village culture of the Aryans and contributed to the process of the transformation of villages into cities. Indraprastha (Delhi), Kosambī (near Allahabad), Vārānasī (Kāśī or Benares) and Ayodhyā, on the banks of the Ghagra (Gogra), all founded in the first millennium B.C., acquired considerable importance.

The events that took place in the area round about Delhi between c.1000 and 700 B.C. form the contents of a celebrated ancient Indian epic called the *Mahābhārata*. In some ways, it resembles the *Iliad* and it played a part in the life of India similar to that of the *Iliad* in ancient Greece.

The story of the other great epic, the *Rāmāyana*, centres round Ayodhyā and indicates the expansion of the Aryans to the south and Ceylon. Its hero, Rāma, is worshipped as God and the *Rāmāyana* serves as the popular Bible of the Hindus of northern India. Sītā, the wife of Rāma, is an ideal of self-sacrifice for Hindu women, and Lakshmana, the brother of Rāma, is the ideal of an obedient younger brother. Hanumān, leader of the monkeys, who helped Rāma fight against Rāvana, the demon king of Ceylon, is the model for a selfless helper, and accounts for the worship of monkeys by the Hindus.

The development of the urban life of the Aryans made them increasingly commercial. They sailed down the rivers in vessels and discovered some convenient ports. It would not have been long before these



mariners, sailing from the mouths of the Indus and the Ganges, reached Ceylon.

Their knowledge of iron endowed Aryans in Ceylon with rapid success over the indigenous population. The immigrants knew about irrigation and easily settled in the northern dry zone. Their descendants called themselves Sinhalese, the people of the lion race and, after they became Buddhists, considered themselves something of a chosen people, rather like the Jews or the Japanese.

By 600 B.C. the Aryan tribes had carved out several monarchies in the plains of northern India. Those who were unable to reconcile themselves with authoritarian forms of government founded settlements near the foothills of the Himalayas and other outlying regions. Their little states are often referred to as ancient Indian republics. Magadha (Southern Bihar) was one of the most powerful monarchies.

The available historical records give us no clue to developments in southern India, but north-western India was experiencing a fresh wave of foreign invasion at this time. The empire of Achaemenid Iran (Persia) expanded to the gateways of India; its rulers conquered Bactria, Gandhāra, and Arachosia and turned these into satrapies. An inscription of about 519 B.C., carved on the face of a cliff by order of Darius I (c.522-486 B.C.) shows that he annexed parts of India as *Hindush*, the twentieth satrapy of his empire. The city of Taxila, near present-day Rawalpindi, became the meeting-ground of the Iranian and later Vedic cultures. The Indian rulers imitated the thick oval Iranian coins which the Greeks called Sigloi or Darics. For two centuries Darius' Indian satrapy remained part of the imperial patrimony of Iran and the fame of Persepolis penetrated as far as Pātaliputra, the chief town of Magadha (South Bihar).

#### ALEXANDER'S INVASION

In 334 B.C. Alexander the Great of Macedon commenced his remarkable career of conquest. After conquering the empire of Darius, he crossed the Indus in 326 and proceeded as far as the Jhelum River in the Punjab, where he defeated Porus, the ruler of this territory, in a decisive battle. The Indian army with its chariots and elephants was on the defensive. Later, Alexander overran the tribal principalities of the Punjab and reached as far as the river Beās. The Macedonian army was now tired, and showing signs of mutiny. Alexander turned back, but died in Babylon on the return journey, leaving behind some garrisons here and there. His Asiatic provinces were united by his general, Seleucus Nicator, into a kingdom which lasted 200 years.

#### RISE AND FALL OF THE ANCIENT INDIAN EMPIRES

The example of Darius and Alexander greatly inspired an Indian prince, Chandragupta Maurya, who rose to power and annexed the entire Gangetic





Sarnath, Lion capital of Aśoka pillar (now the official emblem of the Government of India).

valley, and then proceeded to conquer the tribes in the north who had been prostrated by Alexander's invasion. Seleucus, whom he defeated, surrendered the Trans-Indus territories as far as some parts of modern Afghanistan. Megasthenes, the envoy of Seleucus, who stayed at the Mauryan Court, wrote a book about his experiences. According to this, Pataliputra, Chandragupta's capital, was a fine, large city, and the Mauryan empire founded by him was an organized bureaucracy, controlling all aspects of the life of its citizens.

The most outstanding ruler of the Mauryan dynasty, and one of the greatest emperors in the history of the world, was Aśoka (273-32 B.C.), known as Devānampiya Piyadasi (Beloved of the Gods, of Amiable Appearance). In the early part of his reign he followed stern policies in administration and conquest. The bloodshed of a war he fought in Kalinga (modern Orissa) in the ninth year after his coronation, changed his life. After about two and a half years of mental suffering, he became a devoted Buddhist, and evolved a policy of *dhamma-vijaya* (conquest through piety) in place of aggressive wars. The official policy of *dhamma* was designed to promote righteousness and piety in all spheres of human activity. Inscriptions on rock surfaces, and on pillars set up by him at important crossroads on the principal trade routes or in the capitals of his provinces, detail the significance of *dhamma*. They also indicate the extension of his empire, which embraced the whole of the sub-continent, except for a small part in the south and parts of Afghanistan.

His relations with Devānampiya Tissa, the ruler of Ceylon, were very friendly. He sent the begging bowl of Buddha to the Ceylonese king, and despatched to him a branch of the *pīpal* tree under which Buddha had received enlightenment. Devānampiya Tissa planted it in one of the royal monasteries of Anurādhapura where it still survives, whereas the original Indian tree was later chopped down by a Hindu fanatic! The Sinhalese became devoted Buddhists.

After Aśoka's death, the Mauryan empire fell to pieces. Early in the second century B.C., a Greek ruler of Bactria extended his rule as far as the Punjab and Sind. It is said that through the Greco-Bactrian kingdoms Indians came to be familiar with Western astrology and medicine.

The rise and fall of several Central Asian nomadic tribes, who always made a bid for power as far as the Gangetic plains, kept the Punjab in a turmoil. The chief of one of these, Kanishka, the enterprising monarch of the Kushān dynasty who ruled about 78 A.D., extended his kingdom from Gandhāra to central and eastern India. He was a Buddhist, and his patronage transformed Central Asia into Buddhist territory. It was from here that Buddhism was taken to the Far East. His successors ruled for about 150 years but their power was confined to Peshawar and Taxila.

In 320 A.D. another Chandragupta occupied the throne of Magadha and expanded his kingdom as far as Allahabad and Avadh (Oudh). He



and his successors greatly encouraged a form of the Hindu religion not very different from that of today. The Guptas gave themselves titles such as the Great King of Kings, and the Supreme Lord, but their empire did not compare in glory with that of the Mauryas. Chandragupta II (c.376-415 A.D.) who took the title of Vikramāditya (Sun of Prowess) is represented in mediaeval Hindu legends as the lord of Ujjain and Pātaliputra whose court was adorned by the so-called 'Nine Gems', the most famous of whom was Kālidāsa, the greatest Sanskrit poet and dramatist, who has been much admired in the modern West. Fa-hsien, a Chinese Buddhist pilgrim who travelled in India between 405 and 411, was struck by the royal palaces and the charitable institutions of Pātaliputra. Religious tolerance enabled diverse sects to flourish. Commerce was at its height around the southern coasts of India.

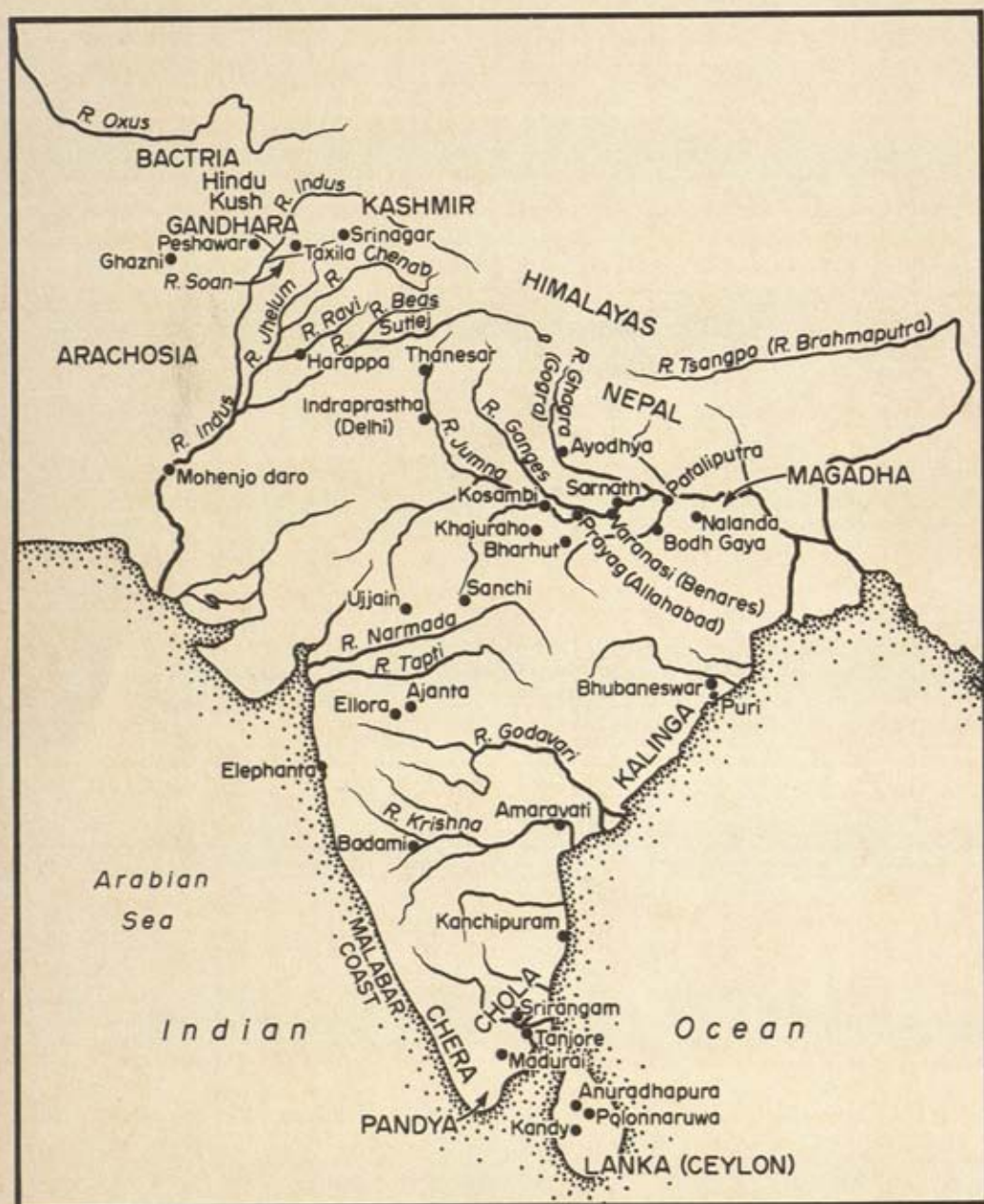
In the middle of the fifth century, the north-west region of the country was once more subjected to incessant invasions, this time by the Hūnas, a people thought to be the Hsiung-nu of the Chinese annals, and the 'White Huns' of later classical European works. In the course of these invasions, Buddhist monasteries and universities were razed to the ground.

It fell to Harsha (606-47) a prince from another city of northern India called Thānesar, to regroup northern and central India under one single rule. We have two accounts of Harsha and his times. The first, by the court poet Bāna, tells of his accession to power. The second was written by a Chinese pilgrim, Hsüan-tsang, who visited India towards the end of his reign. From these pen-portraits Harsha emerges as a protector of religions in the tradition of Aśoka. He maintained diplomatic relations with Central Asia and China.

But immediately following the death of Harsha, his empire fell into fragments. Kashmir grew into a strong power. The Pāla kings of Bengal annexed Bihar and ruled from about 750 to the middle of the twelfth century. The Pāla period witnessed the final flowering of Buddhism and Buddhist art in India. At this time, it was introduced into Tibet where it survives to the present day. From the ninth century, the Rājput clans dominated the political scene in northern India. They were descended from the Hūnas and other invading tribes, though most of them claim that they are pure *kshatriyas*. They carved out kingdoms for themselves in Rajasthan and central and western India.

The inhabitants of the Deccan are mostly of Dravidian origin. How they came to settle there is a controversial question.

It seems likely that this happened before the invasion of the north by the Aryans. Some scholars, however, suggest that they came to India by sea from the west as late as the second half of the first millennium B.C. Another theory holds that some of the islands in the distant Pacific Ocean were peopled either from the Dravidian settlements in India or from an earlier common source. Several resemblances can also be seen between



Ancient India.



aboriginal tribes in southern and western Australia and the fishermen on the Madras coast. Whatever may have happened, the peoples of the Deccan moved at a late stage from the pre-historic to the historical era. By the turn of the last century B.C. they had carved out several principalities, of which Chola, Pāndya, and Chera were the most important. The languages they spoke belong to the Dravidian group, of which the oldest and most important member is Tamil.

From 500 A.D. the kingdoms of the Deccan began to eclipse the glory of northern India. After the mid-sixth century three major kingdoms emerged in the Deccan: the Chālukyas of Bādāmi, the Pallavas of Kāñchīpuram, and the Pāndyas of Madurai. They were always fighting one another. The provincial governors of the Deccan kingdoms ruled with the advice of officers in charge of the various districts. Local assemblies dominated by merchant and artisan guilds played a significant role in administration. The elaborately planned monuments of these kingdoms bear testimony to their prosperity.

In the second half of the ninth century, the power of the Pallavas declined, and the Cholas who took their place more or less dominated the Deccan until the early thirteenth century.

In Ceylon the broad pattern of the history of the Sinhalese kingdom resembles that of various Indian kingdoms which flourished and declined. The Sinhalese were increasingly menaced by Tamil incursions from the eastern coast of South India. They reached the height of their power and prosperity during the reign of Parākramabāhu the Great (1153-86) whose thirty-three year reign was one of peace and prosperity. After his death the Tamil invasions were renewed.

At the end of the thirteenth century, when Marco Polo touched at Ceylon, the island had been invaded by a king from Malaya. The Sinhalese constantly shifted their capitals in order to protect themselves from foreign invasions and internal rebellions, until they reached Kandy in the central hills. This accounts for the neglect of the ancient irrigation works such as reservoirs which had been the main source of the prosperity of the island in earlier centuries.

#### MUSLIM RULE

Meanwhile, a new force was developing which was to make itself felt in South Asia. This was the religion of Islām. It transformed Arabia into a great power. Within twelve years of the death of its founder, the Arabs became the masters of Syria, Iraq, Iran, Egypt, Libya and Tripoli. In 711, Arab forces under General Muhammad bin Qāsim invaded Sind and captured the lower Indus Valley and Delta. They then proceeded to subdue Mūltān in southern Punjab, but further advance was checked by Rājput powers. The Arabs met with even more success in Central Asia where



Bukhāra, Balkh, and Samarqand, erstwhile centres of Buddhism, became nurseries of Islām. In the tenth century a Muslim Turkish dynasty established an independent kingdom in Ghaznī in Afghanistan, on a high plateau overlooking the plains of north-western India, which were ruled by a king called Jayapāla whose ancestors had migrated from Central Asia. A conflict between the two ambitious powers was inevitable.

Between 1001 and 1024, Mahmūd, the most formidable Turkish ruler of Ghaznī, made seventeen devastating raids upon India, sacking amongst other places Mathurā, Thānesar, Kanauj, and even the great temple of Somnāth in Kāthiāwār. His ruthlessness in war and his iconoclasm were motivated more by an insatiable appetite for wealth than by hatred of Hindus. He annexed the Punjab and much of Sind, making Lahore the capital of his Indian conquests, and there his successors ruled for more than a century and a half. Lahore was more prosperous than Ghaznī in its barren hills, and more secure; poets and scholars preferred to settle there.

The Rājput clans who ruled northern India in the eleventh and twelfth centuries were engaged in continual internecine war and thus left the way open to outside invasion.

Punjab served as a base for further Turkish conquests. In 1186 Muhammad bin Sām of Ghor, another Turkish dynasty which had taken over in Ghaznī, seized Lahore. Prithvīrāj III Chauhān, the chivalrous Rājput hero of many Indian legends who ruled from Delhi to Ajmer, defeated him in 1191. In the next year, however, Muhammad attacked with a stronger force and defeated Prithvīrāj. By the end of the twelfth century his daring chiefs had conquered almost the whole of northern India.

In 1206 Muhammad died and was succeeded by his former slave and viceroy, Qutbud-Dīn Aibāk. Four years later he too died as the result of an accidental fall while playing polo in Lahore, but the consolidation of Turkish rule was continued by Sultan Shamsuddīn Īltutmish (1210-35). He crushed all his rivals, handled Turkish pressure groups diplomatically, and built the foundation for a strong Delhi Sultanate.

In 1221 the Mongols, a nomadic people like the Hūnas and the Turks, came from the north-west and seized most of the Turkish principalities up to the west bank of the Indus. This cut off the Indian Turks from their ancestral homeland and they had to fall back on their north Indian kingdom for survival.

Intrigues between rival groups followed Īltutmish's death in 1235, until Balban (1266-87) ascended the throne and once more strengthened the central authority. A few years after his death, the dynasty of Īltutmish was overthrown by another Turkish tribe called the Khaljīs (1290-1320). The most outstanding ruler of this dynasty was Sultan Alā ud-Dīn Khaljī (1296-1316) who stopped the Mongol incursions, conquered Gujarat, reduced the Rājput rajas of Rajasthan to submission, and conquered the



greater part of the Deccan. He constructed a very sound administrative framework, the running of which called for a lot of energy and experience. By 1316, when the Sultan was dying of cancer, signs of disintegration were apparent throughout his vast empire, and in 1320 another Turkish dynasty, the Tughluqs (1320-1413) seized the throne of Delhi.

This dynasty produced several important rulers, one of whom was Muhammad bin Tughluq (1325-51) who was brilliant and idealistic to the point of being a visionary. He tried to introduce several administrative and financial reforms but pressures from self-interested nobles nullified them.

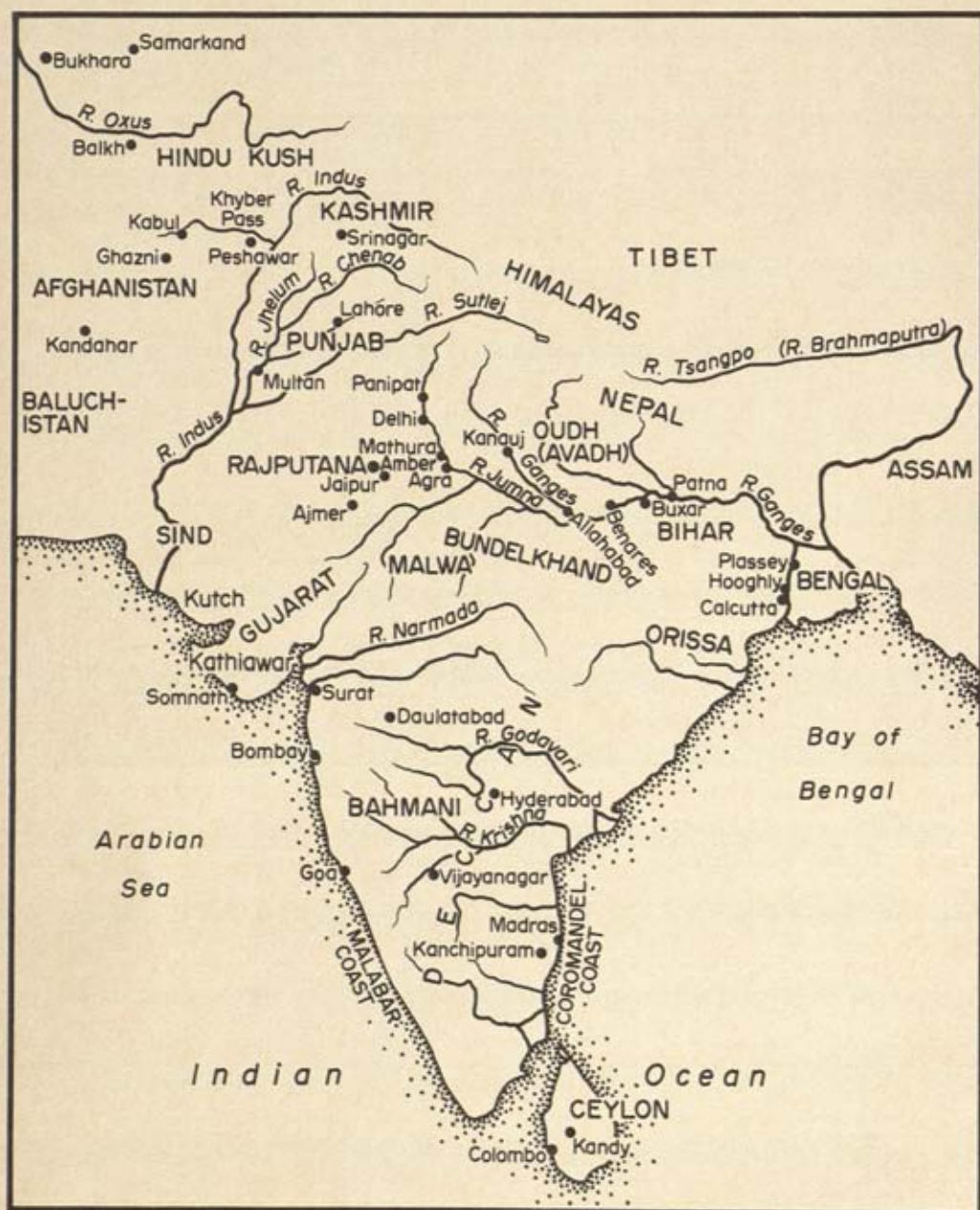
The Turkish chiefs broke out in rebellion; the Sultan crushed them ruthlessly but this did not bring the rebellions to an end. The Hindus of the south took this opportunity to assert their independence and a noble of Persian origin established an independent kingdom called the Bahmanid near Daulatābād. The Muslim rulers of Bengal also became independent of Delhi.

After Muhammad's death, his cousin, Fīrūz, ascended the throne. He was mild-mannered and vacillating and his successors were worthless. In 1398-9 Tīmūr (Tamburlaine or Tamerlane) the great Mongol conqueror, invaded India and sacked Delhi. Although several weak and insignificant rulers nominally continued to reign there, its glory vanished and the important parts of the country now became independent.

Towards the middle of the fifteenth century, Afghan tribes, which had become prominent through horse-dealing, became powerful in the Punjab. Bahlol, the chief of one of them, the Lodīs, seized Delhi in 1451. He kept the other Afghan tribal chiefs satisfied; but they became restless under his son, Sultan Sikandar (1489-1517) and finally broke out under Ibrāhīm (1517-26) who tried hard to crush them. Some of them then invited Bābur, a descendant of Tīmūr, who ruled the Kābul Valley, to come to their aid. A fierce battle took place in which Ibrāhīm lost his life, and thus the reign of the Sultans of Delhi came to an end with the establishment of Mughal rule in 1526.

Out of the ruins of the short-lived southern empire of the Delhi sultans, there emerged the Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagara, whose rajas ruled for about three centuries. It was a prosperous state which developed a centralized administration with a council of ministers dominated by brahmans, and it was divided into several provinces. Its coastal trade was well organized and the development of agriculture and crafts was encouraged.

For some time the Bahmanids ruled the greater part of the peninsula up to the borders of Vijayanagara. They took a keen interest in the promotion of trade and commerce. Mahmūd Gāwān, who served as chief minister to three of the Bahmanid Sultans towards the end of the fifteenth century, reorganized the administration on a sound basis, but the Deccanis



Medieval India, Mughal period.



did not appreciate the principle of opening careers to talent. Their intrigues spelt ruin to the kingdom and by 1525 it was divided into five independent sultanates.

Bābur, the founder of the Mughal dynasty in India, died in 1530. He was succeeded by his son, Humāyūn, a scholar, mathematician and astronomer, who was no match for Sher Shāh (1539-45) a petty Afghan chief who gradually acquired great power and reorganized the Afghans in the eastern provinces so effectively that eventually they were able to drive Humāyūn from India. Sher Shāh encouraged Afghans to migrate to India. He reorganized tariff and revenue policies, and ensured justice. The network of roads constructed during his rule connected all the regions of his kingdom. His son, Islām Shāh, alienated the Afghan chiefs, just as Ibrāhīm Lodī had done. After his death in 1552, many of them became independent, and Humāyūn was able to reconquer India in 1555, before he died early in the next year.

His son, Akbar (1556-1605) was a man of enlightened ideas, a wise ruler and a sound judge of character. Six years after his accession he married a Rājput princess of Amber (Jaipur) and allowed her and other Rājput princesses whom he married to follow their own religious rites in the royal palace. Shortly afterwards he remitted a tax which had been imposed on Hindu pilgrims, and also the *jizya*, a poll tax on Hindus. In 1579 he threw off the influence of the narrow-minded Muslim theologians and initiated a policy broadly based on the principle of co-existence of various nationalities, religions, and interests. His capital was thronged with talented people from Persia and Central Asia and the Rājput states. He took them into his confidence and promoted them according to merit. The system of recruitment to the state service known as *mansabdārī*, which he introduced, was thus based upon the principle of careers open to talent. This enabled him to carve out a strong and well organized empire, extending from Kābul to Bengal and from Kashmir to the north of the Deccan. The independent dynasties which had emerged in the wake of Timūr's invasion in northern India were assimilated into the Mughal empire. Akbar also initiated the policy of the conquest of the Deccan. The administrative machinery evolved by him was based on secular principles.

His son and successor, Jahāngīr (1605-27) was a great lover of nature and painting. In 1627 he was succeeded by his son, Shāh Jahān (1627-58) who was a great builder. Both of them followed the policy of Akbar and enlisted the services of talented persons from all over the world. Their relations with all classes of their subjects were cordial, and foreign visitors were struck with their catholicity of outlook. This enabled them to consolidate the earlier conquests in the north and to extend their empire in the south.

Dārā Shukoh, the eldest son of Shāh Jahān, whom his father had selected as his successor, was a great scholar and a mystic, but he was a





Akbar.



Jāhangīr preferring the Sūfī, Shaikh Husain, to kings. The head visible at the bottom left is a copy of a portrait of James I of England.



Shāh Jahān.



Aurangzeb.



poor judge of men and their talents. The study of philosophy and mysticism had made him superstitious. His three brothers, who were the viceroys of big provinces in the east, west, and south of the country, joined together to overthrow him. When Shāh Jahān fell ill, his third son, Aurangzeb, marched against Dārā Shukoh, defeated him and then killed all his brothers one by one. In 1658, after imprisoning his father, who died a miserable death in captivity eight years later, Aurangzeb ascended the throne (1658-1707).

He was an orthodox Muslim and strongly puritanical in his habits. He revived the department of the 'moral censor', which Akbar had abolished, and put it into the hands of narrow-minded Muslim theologians. They failed to control the growing decadence of Muslim life and themselves became a perpetual source of trouble for Aurangzeb. In the early part of his reign he strictly followed Akbar's policy of making careers dependent on talents and Hindus rose to the highest state offices.

By that time, however, the Marāthā chief, Shivājī, had built a strong power in the west of central Deccan. His banner rallied the fighting races of the region, whose land was too poor to make agriculture very profitable. Aurangzeb's Rājput general, Mirza Rāja Jai Singh, defeated Shivājī and seized many of his forts. Shivājī was persuaded to visit the Emperor at Āgra, where Aurangzeb imprisoned him. Shivājī escaped and made his way by a roundabout route to the Deccan, where he reorganized his followers and became a potent threat to the empire.

Some other restless people, such as the agriculturist Jāts in the neighbourhood of Āgra and the hillmen of the Bundelkhand south of Allahābād, also rebelled, but they were crushed. In the eleventh year of his reign, Aurangzeb embarked upon changing the policy of Akbar. A number of Hindu temples were demolished, and about the middle of his reign he reimposed *jizya* upon Hindus. His successors, though they had the power to pursue Aurangzeb's policy of intolerance, gave it up.

Aurangzeb himself marched to subdue the formidable Marāthās and two Muslim provincial dynasties of the Deccan which had not hitherto been absorbed in the Mughal empire. He annexed the Muslim kingdoms, and fought relentlessly against the Marāthās for about twenty-five years, but his huge army was no match for the swift Marāthā guerillas who knew every corner of the hilly country. The Deccan ruined Aurangzeb and led to the downfall of his empire, which had extended from Kābul to Assam, and from Kashmir to almost the whole of the Deccan.

After his death in 1707, there was a war of succession, and the empire gradually disintegrated. The greater part of the country was in a state of anarchy. Petty Hindu and Muslim chiefs carved out independent principalities. Some of them exploited the religious and emotional sentiments of their people to their own advantage. Of these, the Marāthās in the Deccan were the most formidable. They expanded to the north, seized



Gujarāt and Mālwa and raided Bengal relentlessly, but they were not interested in establishing a well organized empire. The powerful chiefs operated in a sort of confederacy headed by the Peshwās, the descendants of the brahman chief ministers of Shivājī's successors.

In 1739, Nādir Shāh, the ruler of Persia, invaded India and sacked Delhi, thus dealing a mortal blow to Mughal prestige. Ahmad Shāh Darrānī, who rose to power in Afghanistan towards the middle of the eighteenth century, made several raids on the Punjab. In 1757 he too sacked Delhi and four years later defeated a huge army of Marāthās. The Afghan invaders plundered India but had neither the inclination nor the resources to reorganize the administration. However, their relentless raids so shook the foundations of Mughal power in the Punjab that the chiefs of the Sikh community, who had earlier been subdued by the Mughals, were able to capture it without difficulty.

#### THE IMPACT OF THE WEST

The Greeks had established a temporary rule in the north-west of India, and the Romans had later maintained close commercial relations with the southern ports of South Asia.

For many centuries Europeans had seasoned their food with spices from the East: with cloves, nutmeg and mace from the Moluccas, cinnamon from Ceylon and Malabar, and pepper from India and the Indonesian archipelago. The Crusades aroused keener European interest in the East, and the enquiring spirit of the Renaissance encouraged discoveries. The Portuguese explored the coast of Africa beyond the Cape of Good Hope, and then in May 1498 Portuguese ships under Vasco da Gama anchored near Calicut in India. In 1509 the Portuguese Viceroy, Albuquerque, seized Goa and, sailing around Ceylon, conquered Malacca, the key to the Indonesian archipelago. He died in 1515, by which time he had succeeded in diverting the whole of the eastern trade with Europe into Portuguese hands. Several Indian ports came under their control.

Early in the sixteenth century Portuguese ships anchored off Colombo, where they deprived the Moors (Muslims) of their monopoly of trade and tried to seize the whole of Ceylon. The Sinhalese in the Kandy region retained their independence, but other important parts of the island remained under the Portuguese.

The Portuguese mixed and intermarried with the local population and a debased form of Portuguese became the *lingua franca* of the merchants of the ports. Goa was the centre of their political and missionary activity. The famous missionary St. Francis Xavier (1506-52) preached Christianity for ten years after his arrival in Goa. Although the Portuguese controlled the seas, the coastal trade was still in the hands of the Indians, Arabs, Chinese, and Malays, and by the end of the seventeenth century the



Portuguese were reduced to a position of being 'wretched, poor and despised'.

In the early seventeenth century, the Dutch increased their power in the East. In 1656 they captured Colombo, and later Mannar and Jaffna, ostensibly to help the Sinhalese kings against the Portuguese, but the Sinhalese found they had only exchanged one master for another. The Dutch possessions in Ceylon amounted to less than half those formerly held by the Portuguese, but the Dutch consolidated their position by placing the administrative framework on a sound basis. They introduced a legal system based on Roman-Dutch law, improved the existing irrigation system and encouraged the cultivation of commercial crops such as indigo and cotton. The rule of law, the improvement of educational facilities and the introduction of plantations, were all significant departures from the old way of life. The Dutch did not encourage intermarriage. However, mixed unions did occur, and the children of these, and those of mixed Portuguese blood, are known in Ceylon as burghers. After the extinction of Dutch rule in Ceylon, the burghers learnt English and continued to occupy high posts under the British.

Early in the seventeenth century the English East India Company established its trading stations, called factories, at several places in India. In the third quarter of the seventeenth century, the French also founded factories in India. By the middle of the eighteenth century Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay had become the flourishing commercial centres of English trade. The chaotic conditions of the eighteenth century drove the European companies into politics. For some time it appeared that the French would establish an empire under the shadow of the Mughal power by alliances with native rulers, but the English outwitted them in both war and politics.

In 1757, the East India Company's forces, led by Robert Clive, defeated the Nawāb of Bengal, who had felt his position threatened by the English, in the Battle of Plassey; six years later the English delivered a crushing defeat on an alliance of the three great Muslim powers of northern India at Baksar in Bihar. This demonstrated that the English were invincible in war. Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General in India (1774-85) awakened in the Company a sense of its political importance. Cornwallis, Governor-General from 1786-93, Europeanized the administrative machinery of the country, for which the Company now had a new feeling of responsibility. This was a period of stress and strain in the history of Britain, who was fighting on many fronts, but she overcame all her adversaries in Europe and in India. Only in America did she lose colonies. Lord Wellesley, Governor-General from 1798-1805, crushed the Muslim power of Mysore which had been built up by its formidable rulers, Haidar Ālī and Tipu. He also crippled the Marāthā confederacy. Lord Hastings (1813-23) and Lord Amherst (1823-8) completed the task of empire-building.





Merchants' buildings, Madras. By John Gantz, 1829.

Under Dalhousie (1848-56) a number of hitherto independent states were annexed, and railways and the telegraph were introduced. They were originally looked upon with suspicion, but ultimately did much to integrate the sub-continent into one entity.

The commercial and administrative policy of the East India Company and the sort of education it provided gave rise to the development of a new élite class which was increasingly influenced by English rational and liberal thought. They supported British rule and took full advantage of it. This class dominated in Bengal and Bombay.

At the end of the eighteenth century, the Industrial Revolution in England transformed the pattern of the British economy. Formerly, Indian manufactured goods, mainly textiles, had had a flourishing market in Europe; now finished goods from English factories came to be sold in Indian towns. The Free Trade movement of England undermined the commercial privileges of the East India Company, and after 1833 it was reduced to an administrative machine for ruling India, under the overall control of the British Parliament. Lord Hardinge, Governor-General from 1844-8, made English education the passport to those higher appointments open to Indians.

The Hindu and Muslim aristocracy in most of the country, particularly in the Gangetic *doāb*, did not respond favourably to the legal, economic, and educational changes introduced by the Company. In 1857 a mutiny broke out among the sepoys (Indian soldiers) of the Company. Some of the élite of the old society, who felt their position and way of life were being undermined, also rebelled. They became the leaders of the civil population in an uprising designed to exterminate the British, which



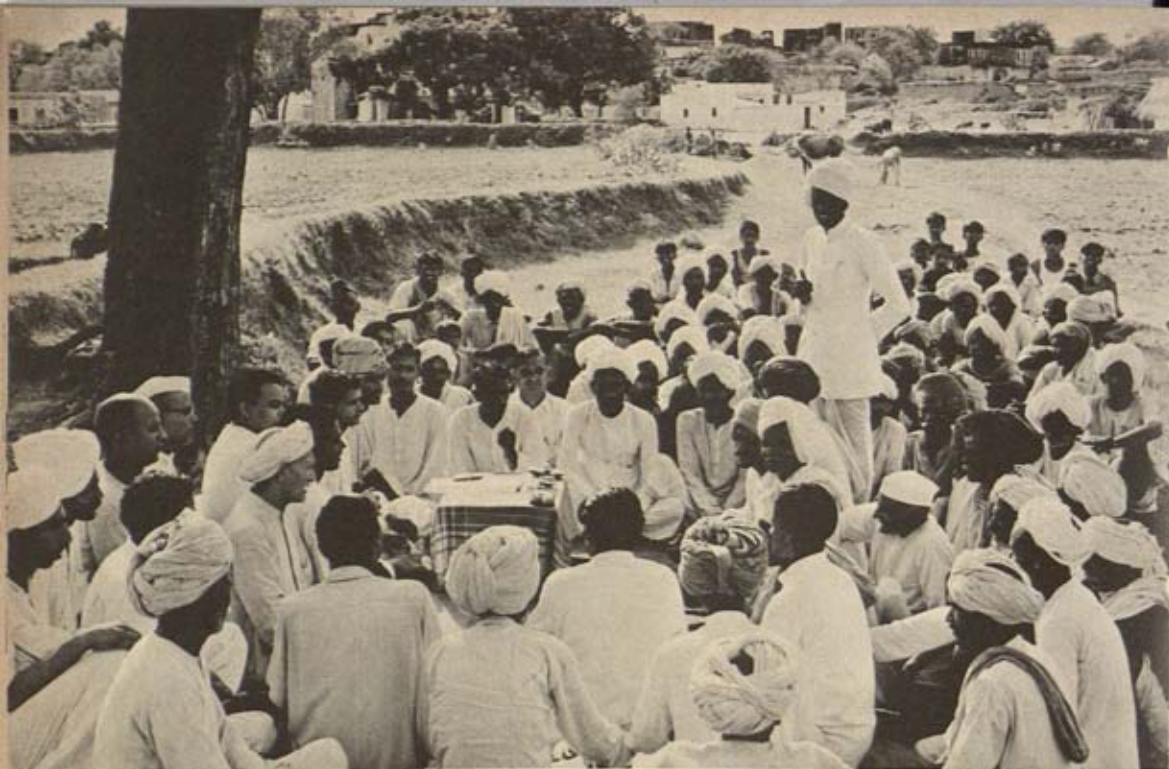
plunged the greater portion of northern India into war, bloodshed and violence. The mutiny and civil uprisings were crushed by the British with the help of Indian forces which remained loyal, such as Gurkhas and Sikhs. As a result, in August 1858, the British Crown assumed complete responsibility for the government of India.

The Dutch rule in Ceylon soon clashed with the interests of the English Company in India. By 1796 the Company had fitted out and despatched a well-equipped expedition which seized the Dutch-held territory in the island without much difficulty. In 1802 Ceylon was made a Crown Colony, and a Governor was appointed. Indian labourers from Madras migrated in large numbers to Ceylon and provided labour for British tea and coffee plantations. The Ceylonese response to English education was more favourable than the Indian one. As early as 1811 the sons of two Ceylonese hereditary officials went to England and studied at Trinity Hall, Cambridge. The English-educated élite of Ceylon was far ahead of the Indian élite of the same class in assimilating the English way of life. The old élite of the former Kandyan kingdom stole a march on their Indian counterparts by organizing a revolt of the countryfolk as early as 1848, though it was crushed within two weeks. The Ceylonese élite were ahead of Indians in political awakening. In 1860 tempers rose on the question of the stationing of British troops in Ceylon. The European planters, the burghers, and the educated Ceylonese joined the movement opposing it. The political agitations gave birth to the Ceylon Political League, whose object was to secure for the unofficial members of the Ceylonese Council Chamber, which had been formed by them, the right to initiate and discuss finance bills.

India, under the British Crown, made rapid strides in the realm of modernization. Many changes were first carried out experimentally in Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras and subsequently introduced in other parts of the country. High Courts were established; universities were founded, elementary and secondary education were extended; railways were developed, roads and other means of communication were improved; and irrigation works were enlarged. The Co-operative movement, introduced in the early twentieth century, sought to solve the grave problems of indebtedness in rural areas. Industrial development transformed the character of the urban population.

Many members of the English-educated élite became increasingly conscious of their rights and privileges. They formed societies and associations on western lines and began to assert themselves in the political, social, and economic fields. They urged the Indianization of civil services and the extension of the powers of local self-government, and they resented the arrogance of the Europeans who considered themselves socially superior. Some Englishmen were sympathetic to the Indian cause.





A village Panchāyat (Council) in session.

In 1885 the Indian National Congress was formed. It fostered the development of sentiments of unity and patriotism among all sections of the Indian people. The methods used by its members, however, made a section of the Muslims suspicious of their aims. In December 1906 the Muslim aristocracy established an organization of their own called the Muslim League. The Congress was itself divided into two groups. The moderates were secular-minded and urged the British government to introduce constitutional reforms. The extremists advocated Hindu revivalism and the overthrow of the British rule through violent means.

The First World War drew Hindu and Muslim politicians together; each group had serious grievances against the British. At the end of the First World War, M. K. Gandhi assumed leadership. He presented a blueprint of the non-violent non-co-operation movement to his countrymen. The whole country enthusiastically responded to his call. While the movement made considerable headway, signs of violence became visible among his restless followers. He called off the movement but this only increased the political confusion. For fifteen years there was a constant see-sawing of political parties and opinions.

Between 1930 and 1939 the British began to think about the eventual transfer of power to Indians. When the Second World War began, the Congress tried to force the issue of independence, but the British ignored



them. The Muslim League grasped this opportunity to champion their own cause and emerged as a strong rival to Congress. M. A. Jinnah, an outstanding lawyer, became the unquestioned leader of the Muslim community. In 1940 he declared that Hindus and Muslims formed two separate nations and advocated the formation of independent sovereign states in the areas where Muslims were in the majority. Between 1944 and 1947 proposals and counter-proposals for the transfer of power were discussed which ended with the success of Jinnah in a modified form. In the middle of August 1947, when independence was finally granted to the country, an independent Muslim state called Pakistan was carved out in the north-west and in the east.

Independence was followed by unprecedented turmoil and bloodshed in both parts of the country. Partition on a religious basis solved none of the minority problems. Out of 440 million people living in India, 43 million are Muslims; and out of a population of 95 million in Pakistan, nearly 10 million Hindus lived in East Pakistan.

During the 1920's, Ceylon was on the threshold of popular government. Its legislature was expanded. Here too there were minority problems; Sinhalese interests seriously clashed with Tamil interests, and the tensions were acute, but nevertheless in 1931 the island obtained universal franchise, only three years later than did Great Britain. The Ceylonese political leaders supported Britain's war efforts, and on 4 February 1948 Ceylon too was granted independence.

#### INDEPENDENT SOUTH ASIA

While British India under the Crown had moved from traditionalism to modernism, 560 princely states remained semi-independent, although under British paramountcy. At Independence their fate was undecided but India's dynamic Home Minister, Sardar Patel, assimilated them in the Indian Union. Pakistan also absorbed the princely states within her borders.

The Nizam, the Muslim ruler of Hyderabad and the richest man in the world, for some time wavered about letting his State become part of India, but in September 1948 Indian troops marched into his territory and he abdicated his power.

Sheikh Abdullah, the popular leader of Kashmir, challenged the authority of its ruthless Hindu Maharaja. Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India, supported the Sheikh, who was nevertheless arrested by the Maharaja. The situation developed into a deadlock. Meanwhile, tribesmen from Pakistan thrust towards Kashmir's capital, Srinagar, and the Maharaja released Sheikh Abdullah, fled to India, and signed an instrument of accession to the Indian Union. Sheikh Abdullah became the Prime Minister of the State. Kashmir was plunged into an undeclared war between India and Pakistan until 1st January 1949, when a ceasefire was imple-



mented. Two-thirds of Kashmir remained in the hands of India; Pakistan controlled about one-third, which came to be known as Azad (Free) Kashmir. The Indian occupation of the Vale of Kashmir, populated almost entirely by Muslims, has been both a cause and an excuse for continuing bad relations between India and Pakistan.

In 1962 the Chinese invasion of India's north-east frontier territories shattered the dreams of India remaining at peace and amity with all the nations of the world. Two years later Nehru himself died; under his leadership the country was endowed with a sound system of secular democracy, based on the principle of adult franchise.

The next Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, recognized that the neglect of agriculture in the 1950's had produced grave problems and moved to correct them. In September 1965, mutual probing of positions in Kashmir produced a short bitter war between India and Pakistan, fought in the Punjab and ended in a few days through Soviet mediation. In January 1966 Shastri died on Russian soil, just after signing an agreement with Pakistan, which relieved but did not end the tension between the two countries.

He was succeeded by Indira Gandhi, Nehru's daughter, then aged 49. Believed by many to be a nonentity, she surprised all by facing many problems hitherto avoided. Surviving a shaky start and a split in the Congress party, she won a convincing victory in the elections of February 1971. India's problems of food supply appeared half solved, and Mrs. Gandhi was about to institute sweeping economic reforms, when the flood of refugees, millions upon millions, driven into India from East Bengal by the Pakistan army's slaughter of their countrymen, thrust all other questions aside; so that by the end of 1971 it seemed that, while nothing but war could alter the situation, no solution could benefit India.

Liaquat Ali Khan, the first Prime Minister of Pakistan from 1947-51, was a man of vision who had the capacity to introduce a democratic system in Pakistan, but his untimely assassination plunged the country into chaos. It obtained a breathing-space under the military dictatorship of Field Marshal Ayub Khan, who streamlined the administration and gave considerable impetus to national reconstruction.

But in 1969 Ayub Khan, harassed by discontent among the privileged groups he had thrust aside and the angry frustration of the new generation of intellectuals, resigned. He was replaced by General Yahya Khan, another North-west Frontiersman, who promised and allowed democratic elections in December 1970. To the astonishment of the cliques which hoped to profit from Yahya's abdication, all but a handful of the seats in East Bengal, and a majority of the seats in the Pakistan legislature, were won by the Awami League, a party favouring greater autonomy for East Pakistan. The result was influenced by the Central Government's indifference to the great storms and floods of November 1970, the worst on record, which killed



hundreds of thousands in East Bengal. Determined that the majority of their countrymen should not deprive them of the power they had once enjoyed, certain Punjabi and Sindi politicians prevailed upon Yahya first to postpone the Constituent Assembly, then to impose martial law, and finally to authorize the slaughter of the Bengali intelligentsia while he was actually engaged in discussions with the prospective prime minister, Mujib ur-Rahman.

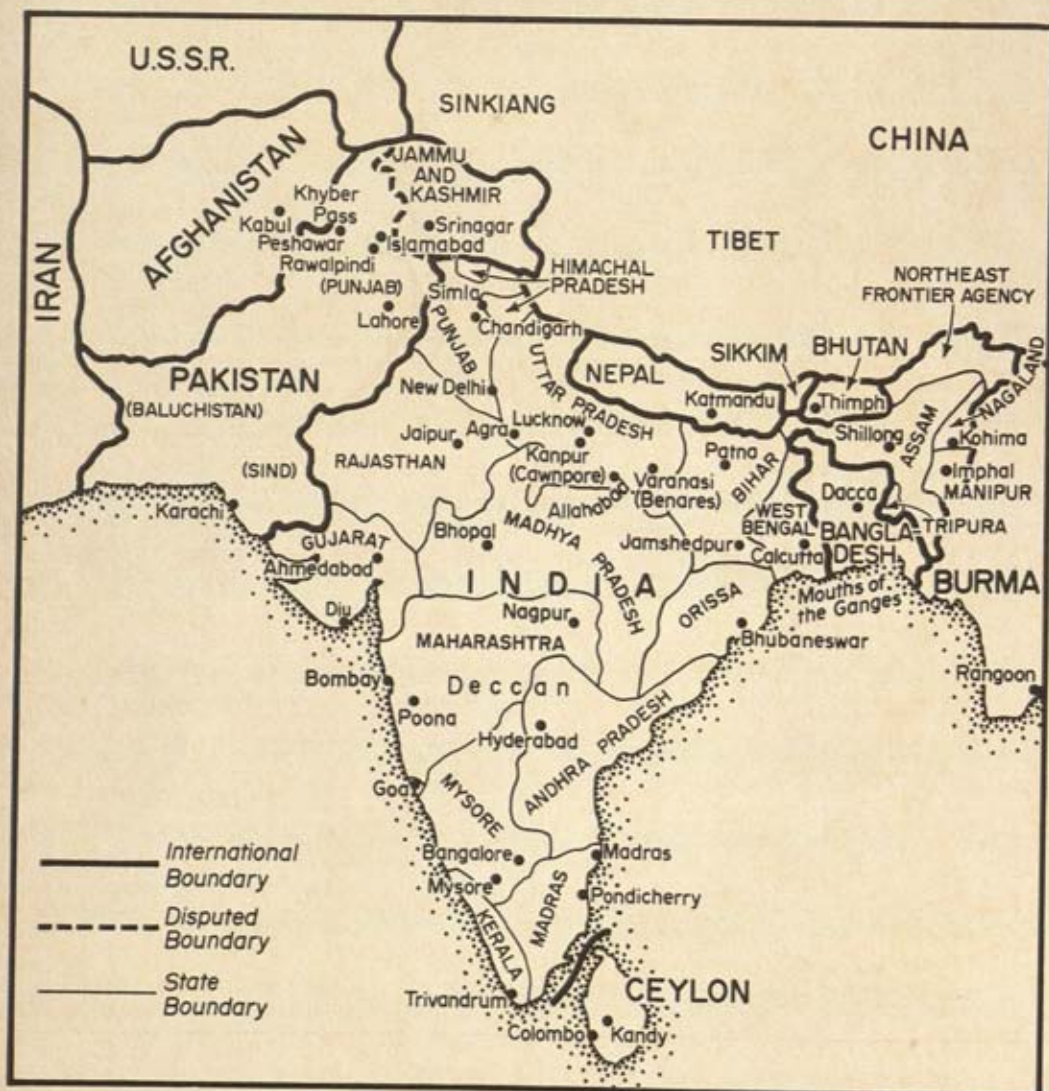
In the last days of March 1971 there followed an outburst of terror against the Bengali race unbelievable in its savage thoroughness, with slaughter and destruction on a scale unheard of since Hitler. Mujib was arrested, but an independent 'Land of Bengal' was proclaimed, Bangladesh; the western troops of the Pakistan army soon crushed open allegiance to the new government. With the rains however, guerillas, hastily trained, poorly armed, but increasingly assisted by the Government of India, began to control parts of the countryside. In November 1971, they launched an offensive from four sides, supported by elements of the Indian army. Before Christmas Pakistani power was broken in the east, and the dictator Yahya Khan was forced to resign. He was replaced by Z. A. Bhutto, a politician who had supported him in his repression of the Bengalis. But Bhutto released Sheikh Mujib ur-Rahman, who returned to East Bengal, now officially known as Bangladesh, and became its Prime Minister.

The events in East Bengal are the most significant for the sub-continent since independence. The idea on which Pakistan was founded has been shattered; Bangladesh will need immense sums for reconstruction, but a voluntary return to Pakistan seems impossible.

In Ceylon, a conservative government ruled from independence to 1956, when S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike was swept to power on a programme of socialism, and racial and cultural supremacy for Sinhalese Buddhists. In 1958, there were serious race riots involving the Tamils, both immigrant and denizen; in 1959, a Buddhist monk with a personal grudge murdered the Prime Minister. A disturbed and unstable period followed. Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, his widow, finally emerged as Prime Minister and held power until 1965. Then, after promising more than she could perform, she was defeated; but Senanayake's government too was unable to overcome economic difficulties, and Mrs. Bandaranaike was returned to power in 1970, only to face the same problems. Ceylon now needs to import rice, yet the prices of her own products are depressed; educated youth's expectations of jobs and prosperity cannot be fulfilled; and militant Buddhist groups are straining the relations between the different races and cultures of the country. In May 1971 there was a widespread uprising, probably helped by the Government of China, claiming to be inspired by Che Guevara, the Cuban revolutionary. It was put down with much difficulty, and the problems that produced it remain unsolved.

India, Pakistan and Ceylon were all members of the Commonwealth,

until recently when Pakistan left it because most Commonwealth countries recognized Bangladesh. They strictly maintain their own individuality. They are trying to develop their village communities on a scientific basis. The gap between the developed and undeveloped parts of the country is the main cause of widespread dissatisfaction and frustration, and there are other serious problems such as racialism, linguistic rationalism, regionalism, and communalism.



Modern political boundaries of the Indian sub-continent.



All the modern international political movements have their supporters in India and Ceylon. The scramble for higher service in government, the nepotism of the party in power, the consequences of inflation and the increasing growth of population are great challenges to the proper functioning of the Indian and Ceylonese democracies. In Pakistan, where unprecedented progress had been achieved up until the cataclysm of 1971, democracy is gradually reasserting itself under President Bhutto. But the stability of the sub-continent as a whole now depends on the normalization of relations between India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

## RELIGION

### HINDUISM (BRAHMANISM)

Hinduism has no founder, but has evolved through intense intellectual and spiritual activity over more than three thousand years; it has assimilated movements and absorbed ideas from a large number of sources. It has outlived all the challenges which it has had to face in past centuries.

Its earliest form is embodied in the *Rig-Veda*. This religion, based on Indo-Aryan traditions, is called the Vedic religion. Like the Greek gods, the Vedic gods were mainly connected with the sky and predominantly male. Sacrificial rites ensured the gratification of the gods and their protection of men. The sacrificial fire was fed with clarified butter (*ghee*), milk and grain. Larger animal sacrifices also took place. The priests who performed sacrifices composed the *Brāhmanas*, treatises relating to the prayers and sacrificial ceremonies, which were appended to the Vedas.

In the first millennium B.C. mysticism was developed by ascetics living in jungles, and this found expression in the literature known as the *Upanishads*, or 'secret counsels'. They seek to inculcate a spirit of self-restraint, generosity, and loving kindness. This development is regarded as the most sublime and subtle form of the early religious system of the Aryans, and it is often known as Brahmanism.

### BUDDHISM

Buddhism rejected the Aryan doctrines of racial purity and the concept of sacerdotal dogmatism. Its founder, the Lord Buddha, was born about 563 B.C. His name was Siddhārtha and he belonged to the republic of the Śākya clan of Kapilavastu, in the Nepal Tarai. At twenty-nine, he renounced the worldly life. After a period of prolonged ascetic exercises one day under a *pīpal* tree at a place known as Bodh Gaya, he felt himself illuminated by an inner vision.

For about forty years he preached his spiritual experiences to the people of Magadha and the neighbouring territories. He urged his disciples

to give up violence and bloodshed and to lead a righteous life. He rejected all caste distinctions and did not leave anything to divine intervention.

By the end of the second century B.C., the teachings of Buddha were written down in the works known collectively as the Pāli Canon. Buddhist ethical teachings were embodied in the *Jātakas*, a collection of stories and legends, many of which resemble Aesop's fables and are part of the common heritage of all Indo-European peoples. The earliest surviving form of Buddhism, known as Theravāda (the teaching of the Elders) is still found in Ceylon, Burma, Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand.

Those who broke from the original rules believed that human nature craved something more. The cold, solitary figure of the Buddha, of whom it was forbidden to make any image, was too remote to attract simple people. They believed that many men had attained perfection, but preferred not to cut the chain of existence altogether through their merit, so that they could help other men to attain a higher state. These incarnations of charity were called Bodhisattvas. Those who believed in these heavenly Bodhisattvas and worshipped them, together with the Buddha, belonged to the Mahāyāna (Great Vehicle which was to carry multitudes to salvation). They made images of the Buddha, and the older Theravāda school copied them in this. Though Mahāyāna Buddhism also died out in India, it flourished in Tibet, China, and Japan, as well as in Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim.

#### JAINISM

The fundamental doctrine of the Jains is mainly based on the principle of non-violence (*ahimsā*) to which Gandhi gave a political as well as a moral complexion. The founder of this sect, Mahāvīra, who belonged to a tribal republic, was born in north Bihar in about 540 B.C. Like Buddha, he denied the existence of a Supreme Creative Spirit. According to him, Man is the architect of his own destiny; emancipation from suffering does not depend upon the mercy of any Divine Being.

The Jain scriptures were settled in their present form a thousand years after the death of Mahāvīra.

#### PRE-ARYAN BELIEFS

The pre-Aryan Indian population worshipped the Mother Goddess, nāgas (snake-spirits) and yakshas (male) and yakshīs (female earth spirits), fertility gods, tree spirits, fairies, goblins, and human heroes. They made images and built bamboo huts or platforms where they installed them. The sacrifices of the Aryans and a religion devoid of image worship did not appeal to the indigenous inhabitants, who continued in their own ways, which finally made a deep impact upon the Aryans. Their statues may





Goddess Sarasvatī. The spouse of Brahmā and patroness of art, music and literature, she is depicted in this drawing from a Jain palm-leaf manuscript holding a book and a lute, attended by a swan.

rightly be called the ancestors of the images of the Bodhisattvas, Buddha, and the Hindu gods.

The early Aryans gave the name Nāga to all the food-gathering aborigines who had retired to the forests rather than submit like the *dāsas*. The brahmans who retired to the forests co-existed with them in peace, and even married Nāga women, thus starting the legend that some high-born Hindus are descended from a snake spirit.

The spirit world of Ceylon is remarkably similar. 'Devil dancing' or *shamanism* in Ceylon, and in Kerala in India, bestows a trance-like state of ecstasy upon the dancer and he is able to command the supernatural. Magic signs ensure protection against evil spirits and belief in these accounts for many superstitions and much credulity in South Asia.

#### POPULAR HINDUISM

Popular Hinduism can be traced back to post-Vedic practices and is embodied in much literature, mostly compiled in the first millennium A.D. In popular Hinduism, the worship of Vishnu and Śiva is predominant; these gods are not in competition with each other, but are complementary. In the more subtle form of Hinduism, the god's grace is not confined to his devotee alone; faith in any one deity is faith in God as a whole. This makes Hinduism monotheistic, but the form of Hinduism which is found in the more backward rural village areas is a curious mixture of pre-Aryan beliefs and those found in the more sophisticated form of Hinduism.

The basic rule of Hinduism is worship. An image, representing a god, is offered water, fruits, flowers, etc. The rituals of worship are drawn from the everyday life of human beings. In the morning the god's image is awakened by music, and fed with rice and fruit; at night he is ceremoniously put to bed. Worshippers may visit the temples at will, alone or with their families and friends; no congregational prayer is held in the orthodox temples.

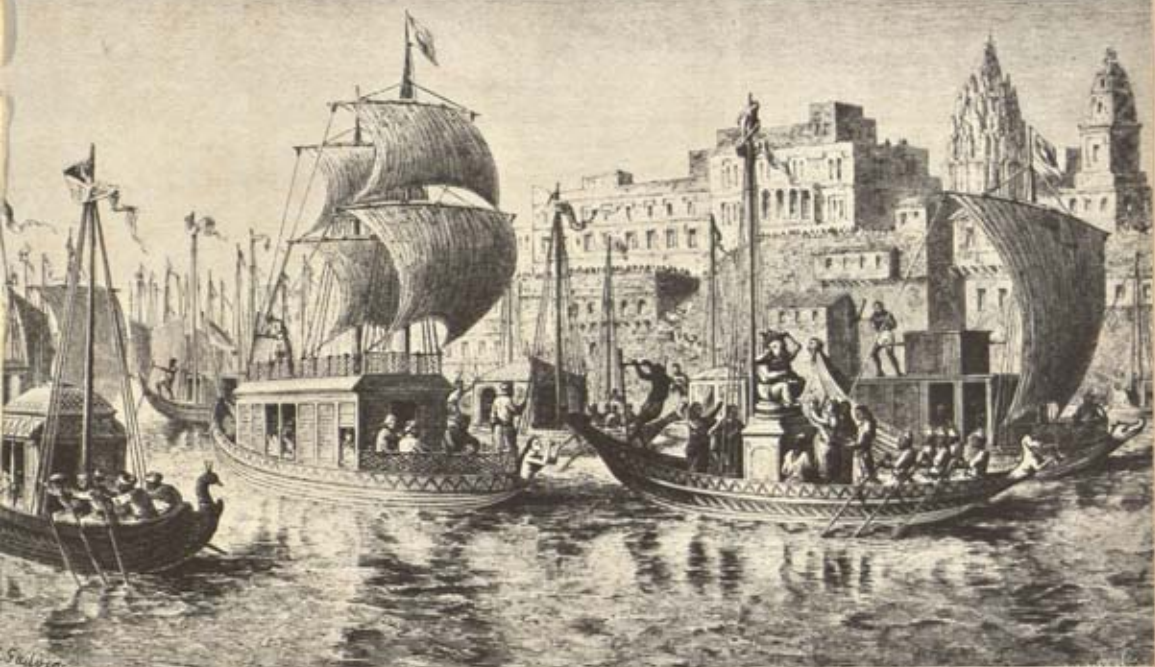
#### ISLĀM

Islām first appeared in Arabia at the beginning of the seventh century A.D. The Arabs are a Semitic race, whose language is related to Hebrew. Muhammad, the prophet of Islām, was born into the Quraysh tribe of Mecca. One day in the year 610, while meditating in a little cave outside Mecca, he received a divine call to be a prophet; he was told that he should preach belief in one God, as the Jewish prophets had done. His own tribe rejected his message but the people of Medina showed interest in his teachings and so he emigrated to Medina. This event, called *hijrī*, later marked the beginning of the Islamic era. He died on 8 June 632.

The messages Muhammad received from God were later compiled as the work known as the *Qurān* (Koran). Muslims believe that this is the word of God (Allāh) dictated to Muhammad by the Archangel Gabriel. The traditions about Muhammad were also subsequently collected into the *Hadīth*. The *Qurān* and the *Hadīth* are the main sources of Islamic law, theology, and religious thought. The pillar of the Islamic faith is the profession (*kalima*) that 'there is no God whatsoever but Allāh; Muhammad is the messenger of Allāh'. Five times a day a believer must turn his face to Mecca (towards the west in South Asia) and offer the prescribed prayer; he must fast throughout the month of Ramadān; and give two-and-a-half per cent on certain classes of property in alms to the poor. Every Muslim of either sex who has sufficient means must go on a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in his lifetime. *Jihād* (striving) is a controversial term, but in the works of mediaeval scholars it came to mean a war of extermination against non-believers. Muhammad based the social ethics of his community on the existing practices and taboos of the Jews, Christians, and the animistic Arabs. Thus pork was prohibited, circumcision was compulsory, and animals for eating had to be killed by cutting their throats and letting them bleed to death.

Muhammad's teachings were straightforward and direct, without mystical elements. In the first century of Islamic expansion, the growing trends of Muslim imperialism produced a strong reaction from some ascetically-minded companions of Muhammad. They believed that fervent prayers and fastings bestowed special grace upon the soul. They came to be called Sūfis. The path of the journey towards spiritual perfection, the





Nineteenth-century print showing the festival of the Hindu god Ganeśa on the Ganges at Vārānasi.

ultimate end of Sūfism, is called *Tariqah* (path); Sūfīs deem it higher than the framework of the Muslims' sacred law known as *Sharīah*. In the earlier centuries of Islām, the Sūfīs were simply ascetics with no great mystical literature; subsequently, they were greatly influenced by Hellenism, Christian monastic practices, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and even by Hindu speculative thought.

By the end of the tenth century, Sūfism crystallized into a popular movement in Persia and Central Asia. By the twelfth century, it was divided into various orders living in *khānqahs* (hospices) under rules inspired by the Christian and Buddhist monastic orders. Some did not belong to any specific order and moved from place to place. They were known as *qalandars*. The Sūfīs in India, as elsewhere, elicited the great respect of the Muslim masses; in India their *khānqahs* were the rendezvous of all sections of the Muslim community, as well as of Hindu mystics. Some of them interested themselves in converting the Hindus to Islām, but their methods differed greatly from those of Christian missionaries.

#### THE BHAKTI MOVEMENT

By the seventh century some Hindu teachers in the Tamil country had begun to advocate the intensely emotional worship of a personal God. They preached that idol worship was not necessarily the best way of

worshipping God. He should be invoked through chanting hymns and playing music. Their ideas spread to the north around the time of the Turkish invasion. They were called the followers of the path of *bhakti* ('trust', 'devotion'). From the fourteenth century, the Sūfis and the Bhakts (followers of *bhakti*) supplemented and complemented one another. Kabīr and Nānak were the most outstanding preachers of *bhakti* in fifteenth and sixteenth century northern India. The disciples of Nānak came to be known as Sikhs (disciples); they sang Nānak's hymns in the local Punjabi dialect and were required to assemble for *Sat Sang* ('Truthful Companionship') to invoke God. Nānak was succeeded by ten *gurus* ('guide' or 'master').

#### THE SIKHS

Early in his reign, Jahāngīr came into conflict with Sikhs. Guru Arjan, who had gathered the teaching of Nānak into the religious work, *Guru Granth*, was asked by the Emperor's rebellious son, Khusrau, to bless his cause. The Guru, unmindful of the consequences, blessed him. When Khusrau was defeated in 1606, Jahāngīr ordered the Guru to be executed, while a Muslim saint who had also blessed Khusrau was expelled from India. Arjan's son, Guru Har Govind, resolved to avenge his father, and acquired the support of the rājās of the Punjab hills. Their political activities aroused the hostility of the Mughal rulers. In the last quarter of the seventeenth century, Guru Govind, the tenth Guru, transformed the Sikhs into a strong militant community called *Khalsa* (Body of Pure Men). They were to keep the hair and beard unshorn, wear a comb in the hair to keep it tidy, knee-length breeches, a steel bracelet on the wrist, and were to be always armed with a sabre. They were not supposed to smoke tobacco or chew it, but alcohol was not prohibited.

After the death of Aurangzeb, the Sikhs made a bid for power, but were defeated. It was only in the last quarter of the eighteenth century that they extended their sway over the whole of the Punjab. Ranjit Singh (born 1780, died 1839) their able and ambitious chief, transformed the Sikhs into a formidable power. In 1801 he had himself crowned king and assumed the role of the defender of the *Khalsa* (The Pure, the Elect of Guru Govind). But Sikh political power was short-lived. It disintegrated after the death of Ranjit Singh.

The Sikhs are a most industrious community and they take Singh or 'lion' as a part of their name. Their homeland is the Punjab where they dominate agriculture, trade and commerce. The Sikh community have maintained their superiority as great fighters, and in recent times have begun to produce intellectuals.

#### CHRISTIANITY

It is believed by some Indian Christians that St Thomas, one of the twelve apostles of Jesus, preached Christianity in south India and died there. Other



traditions say that a different Thomas, from Edessa, arrived at Malabar with some Persian Christians in about 345. The advent of the Portuguese gave a new impetus to Christian missionary activities. Those missionaries who learnt the regional languages achieved considerable success in their work. In fact the external forms of Roman Catholicism did not seem very strange to the Hindus, who found emotional appeal in its religious rites and use of symbols such as images of Christ and of the saints.

Thomas Stephens (1549-1619) the first English Jesuit in India, arrived in Goa in 1579 and lived like a *sannyāsi* (Hindu ascetic). He wrote a monumental work in Marathi verse entitled *Krista Purāna* (Christian Purāna—book of mythology). Father Robert de Nobili, an Italian of noble birth who left for Goa in 1605, delivered stimulating sermons to Hindus and he is credited with having converted quite a number of high-caste Hindus to Christianity. The Catholic missionaries achieved considerable success in the Deccan and Ceylon. The Jesuits found a warm welcome under Akbar and built churches at Lahore and Āgra. Talented Christians held important posts in Mughal times.

The East India Company, however, did not permit missionaries to settle in its territories. Early in the eighteenth century members of the Royal Danish Mission began to arrive in India. At the end of the eighteenth century, Schwartz, a Lutheran priest, mastered several Indian languages, preached Christianity very successfully in the south, and gained the respect of all sections of society.

From the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Baptist missionaries made Bengal the centre of their activities. They published translations of the Bible in regional dialects, opened schools and arranged for the care of the sick and those who were forsaken and the outcasts of society. After 1813, the East India Company permitted (subject to some restrictions) missionaries to operate in its territories. Their activities increased and other sects also established their centres. Their indiscreet propagation of the gospel and outright condemnation of the Hindu and Muslim religions occasionally caused serious tension, but the crisis was always averted because of official intervention. The social services of the missionaries were invariably appreciated and for this Hindu and Muslims paid unstinted reverence to the Christian priests.

In Ceylon, missionaries provided education more efficiently and more economically than the government did. In the 1870's Buddhists in Ceylon took up the challenge of the Christian missions and fought with weapons similar to those used by them. They established Buddhist Sunday schools and even sang Buddhist hymns and carols.

#### HINDU REFORM MOVEMENTS

The missionaries' ruthless criticisms of the Hindu gods, and the rational and liberal ideas generated by Western education, led to a scientific re-

examination of their religious beliefs on the part of some Hindus. Rāmmohan Roy (1772-1833) who is rightly called the father of Modern India, studied the Hindu scriptures carefully and vindicated Hinduism by establishing the Brāhmo Sabha (later known as Brāhmo Samāj) or the One God Society. He asserted that idolatry was no part of Hinduism in its subtlest monotheistic form, and that the popular Hindu practices had emerged because of the ignorance of the priests and the superstitions of the people. He argued that the beliefs of the Unitarian Christians were identical with those embodied in the Vedas.

Several important reformers followed Rāmmohan Roy. Debendranāth Tagore (1817-1905) further strengthened the Brāhmo Samāj and worked for the revitalization of Hinduism. His disciple, Keshub Chandra Sen, reconciled Hindu devotional practices with Christian teachings.

Dayānand Saraswatī (1824-83) based his reforms on the authority of the Vedas. He urged that the Vedas did not sanction idol worship, and that their study should be open to all, and should not remain a monopoly of the brahmans alone. He lectured all over India and denounced both Islām and Christianity. His preachings, though energetic, were not free from acrimony. In 1875 he established an association called the Arya Samāj (the Society of the Aryas, or Noble Men) which gave considerable impetus to the rise of Hindu nationalism, particularly in the Punjab.

Seven years later he established a Cow Protection Society. From time immemorial Hindus had looked upon cows as sacred for religious as well as economic reasons. Dayānand's society organized an orthodox Hindu movement to fight against the beef-eating British. The Muslims, who also ate beef, came within the range of fire. The movement gave a new emphasis to the sanctity of the cow in modern India.

Śrī Rāmkrishna (1836-86) preached a faith of selfless devotion to God. His disciple, Swāmi Vivekānanda (1863-1902) addressed the First World Parliament of Religion at Chicago in 1893 and lectured on Hinduism in America and England. His successful preaching filled the minds of modern Hindus with a sense of dignity and pride. He urged them to live up to the highest ideals of their religion.

#### MUSLIM MODERNISM

Syed Ahmad Khān (1817-98) was the pioneer of a reform movement among the Muslims. He urged his countrymen to take full advantage of British rule in India and to improve their intellectual and moral horizon by obtaining an English education. He sought to explain the *Qurān* in the light of contemporary scientific developments and maintained that the supernatural and irrational elements in Islamic teachings were not the essential part of the religion.



Amīr Alī (1849-1928) re-interpreted Islām to the West in his *Spirit of Islām* and *Short History of the Saracens*. He was assertive, not apologetic in his interpretations. Iqbāl (1876-1938) was a poet and philosopher who held that 'Islām rejects the old static view of the universe and preaches a dynamic view'. Abul Kalām Azād (1888-1958) was one of the greatest scholars of Arabic in modern times. He denounced a blind following of the West and argued that the dynamic teachings of the *Qurān* were designed to promote in human beings a broad humanitarian outlook.

## EDUCATION AND LEARNING

In ancient and mediaeval times, education was a duty voluntarily assumed by great sages and teachers, and rulers and the rich set aside property for the maintenance of schools and colleges. Love of learning for its own sake was their motive and teachers were left free of supervision. The Buddhists imparted learning in their monasteries; Nālandā in South Bihar was a great Mahāyāna Buddhist intellectual centre.

Medical, industrial and commercial education was undertaken by the guilds, and later by individual masters within the caste. Muslim artisans trained their own apprentices.

The ancient language of India is Sanskrit, one of the most important Indo-European classical languages. The Hindu religious works were all written in this language. Its poetry is stimulating and its dramas are superb. Kālidāsa, who wrote *Śakuntalā* amongst other plays, is regarded as one of the greatest dramatists of the ancient world.

The Buddhist sacred literature is written in Pāli, a language resulting from the mingling of the dialects of north-western and eastern India.

Tamil is the language of the present state of Madras and it is spoken by the Indians of the northern and eastern districts of Ceylon. Tamil is essentially a Dravidian language, though its vocabulary has been influenced by Sanskrit, just as English has been by Latin.

Sinhalese, the language of the Ceylonese, is derived from some ancient dialects of north India together with Pāli. In Ceylon about eight million people speak Sinhalese while two million people speak Tamil.

The Turks and Mughals encouraged the use of Persian. In India it developed distinctive characteristics of its own, and Indian scholars wrote some fine works in Persian. Under the Mughals, an increasingly large number of Hindus learnt it. Persian translations of Sanskrit religious works fostered the development of a spirit of tolerance and understanding among the different sections of the population.

By the twelfth century the local dialects had begun to crystallize into the modern regional languages. The common people used them in their daily conversation, and some poets wrote very stimulating religious and spiritual poetry in the regional languages.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the Christian missionaries translated the Bible into the regional languages, or vernaculars. In the early nineteenth century Fort William College, established by Wellesley at Calcutta, became a rendezvous of scholars of the regional languages of northern India. Under the direction of European professors, they wrote some outstanding works in the regional languages. This gave rise to the development of prose in these languages. The introduction of the printing press, and the publication of vernacular newspapers which began in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, gave further impetus to the development of the regional languages. Translations of English works, including those of the latest literary movements, and works on Western philosophies, enriched the regional languages. Rabindranāth Tagore (1861-1941) was the most outstanding modern poet of the sub-continent. An English translation of his Bengali poems, *Gitanjali* (Song Offerings) won for him the Nobel Prize for literature.

The Indian Constitution recognizes fourteen official regional languages. The north Indian languages belong to the Indo-Aryan family, while the four south Indian ones are Dravidian. Hindi has been recognized as the official language of India as a whole, although in the main it is only spoken in the central and northern part of India. The Bengalis and the people of the south are strongly opposed to the status given to Hindi, and linguistic quarrels, with their connotation of rivalry between the various regions of India, are a serious threat to the peace of the country.

Pakistan tried to make Urdū, which is very similar to Hindi, its sole national language, but East Pakistan rejected the proposal. Consequently Bengali was recognized as the national language of East Pakistan, while Urdū is the official language in West Pakistan.

Intellectuals, both in India and Pakistan, prefer English. Both governments use English at the higher administrative level, and universities, institutes of higher learning, and scientific bodies use English.

## THE ARTS

### ANCIENT INDIAN ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE

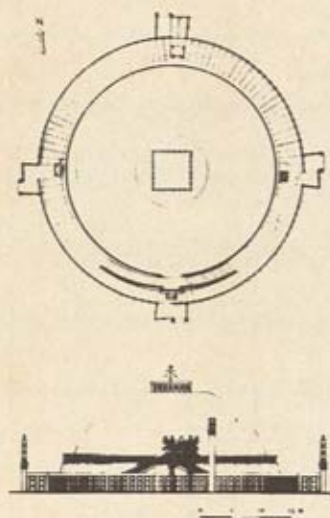
Indian art mirrors the successive phases of Indian civilization. In richness of form it is not inferior to Indian literature and philosophy. Although Indian artists were influenced by many trends from different sources, they assimilated them in a specifically Indian way, adapted to their religious feelings and their way of life.

The first Indian artists were interested in showing scenes of daily life, and the reliefs of Sānchī, Bhārhut, and Amarāvati give us glimpses of the palaces of the rich and of the huts of the poor. Later, they concentrated



upon creating symbolic representations of various qualities of the Supreme Being, and large stone or metal idols for worship seem only to have become widespread about the first century A.D.

The Aryans originally buried their dead, marking their graves with mounds of earth, similar to the barrows left by the Celts in Great Britain. The Jains and other sects raised monuments to their dead, resembling these, which were generally called *stūpas*. The relics of Buddha and his



Ground plan and side view of Sānchī *stūpa*, showing surrounding railings with the gateway and pillar.

chief disciples were deposited at sites associated with some significant event in their lives. These relics were kept in caskets and buried in small chambers beneath the *stūpas*—semi-circular mounds of earth faced with stone, brick or plaster. The best preserved of all ancient Indian *stūpas* is at Sānchī in Central India.

The needs of the ascetic communities of Buddhist monks were best served by cutting buildings out of solid rock. The most famous of these are those at Ellora and Ajantā, but there are many others. Other sects as well as Buddhists took to carving cave temples and monasteries and there are important Hindu and Jain caves also.

In the first centuries A.D. Gandhāra, now the districts of Peshawar and Rawalpindi in Pakistan, produced a remarkable school of art, mainly sculpture, which was profoundly Indian yet influenced by Hellenistic and Persian forms. In the Gandhāra images Buddha retained all his symbolic characteristics—the close-cut, curly hair, the swelling on the crown of the

head indicating wisdom, the long ear-lobes, the half-closed eyes, the arms extending nearly to the knees—and yet the statues as a whole were infused with Grecian spirit.

The earliest Brahmanical temples were simple structures of wood. Later they were constructed in brick and stone. The centre of every temple is a small dark chamber in which the idol is kept. The Hindus did not use the arch. Their temples are therefore built in trabeate style, as were those of the Greeks; the roof is supported by pillars and beams of wood or stone.



Detail of Buddha image from Gandhāra.

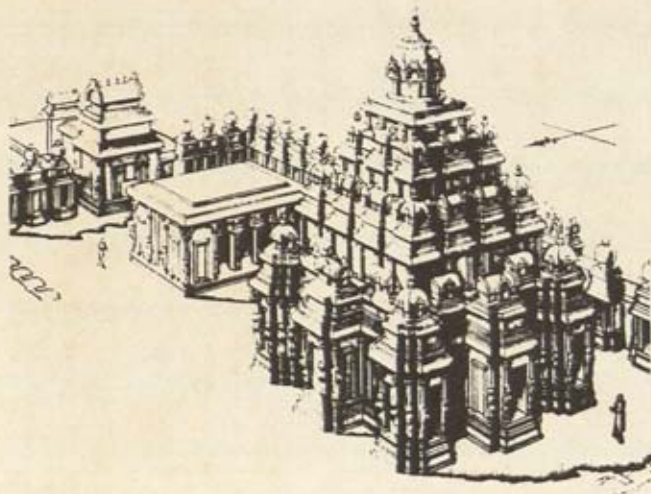
The ancient and mediaeval temples were mostly built in one of two styles, depending on the method of roof or spire construction used. The roofs of the southern temples in the Dravidian style were pyramidal and rose in several stages, crowned by a small circular or polygonal dome. The temples at Kanchīpuram, Tanjore, Madurā, and Śrīrangam are the best examples of this style.

In the north Indian temple, the spire is a lofty tower with slightly curving sides narrowing towards the top and crowned with a large fluted block, surmounted by a vase-shaped finial. The temples of Bhubaneswar and Purī (Orissa) and Khajurāho (about 100 miles, or 160 km, south-east of Jhānsī) all built from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries, are the best examples of the northern or Indo-Aryan style.

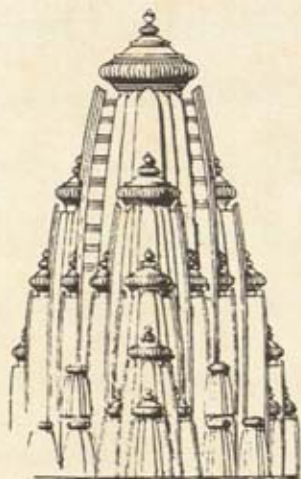




Early shrines.



Temple at Kanchīpuram.



Khajurāho.



Bhubaneswar.

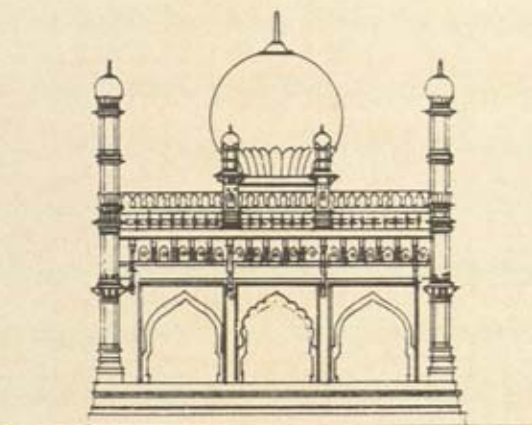
The temples were ornately decorated with sculpture, the plastic art of Khajurāho being outstanding.

#### MUSLIM ARCHITECTURE

The Muslims of Arabia had no real traditions of architecture, and assimilated late Roman and Byzantine techniques, adopting the arch and the dome.

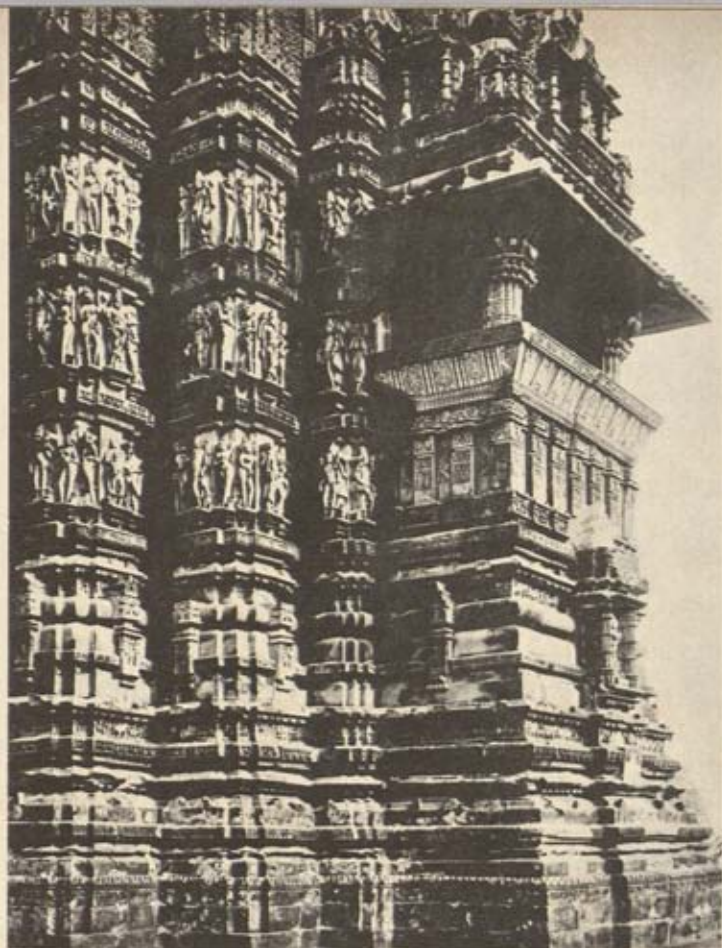
The principal duty of pious Muslims is to pray in congregation and this is done in mosques. Islām forbids the representation of any human or animal form; in Muslim buildings, therefore, ornament is restricted to conventional designs and calligraphy. The Muslims bury their dead, and in the tombs of the great the Muslims found a second means of architectural expression. Mosques and tombs constitute the most important Muslim remains in India and Pakistan.

Some of the best examples of the architecture left by the Muslims exhibit a remarkable synthesis of artistic influences from India, Persia, and Central Asia. When Shāh Jahān began to build the famous Tāj Mahal on the left bank of the River Jumna at Āgra, as a tomb for his dearly-loved wife, Mumtāz Mahal, all the essential features of a garden tomb had already evolved and the stage was set for a masterpiece. The mausoleum stands in a fine garden and is entirely covered with white marble, some of it inlaid with coloured stones in delicate designs. The finely-cut marble cenotaphs of the Empress and her husband, who was eventually buried beside his wife, are enclosed by a very elegant pierced-screen, some eight



Mosque at Bījāpūr. Probably built in A.D. 1586 by Ibrāhīm II in memory of his wife, Malika Jahān.





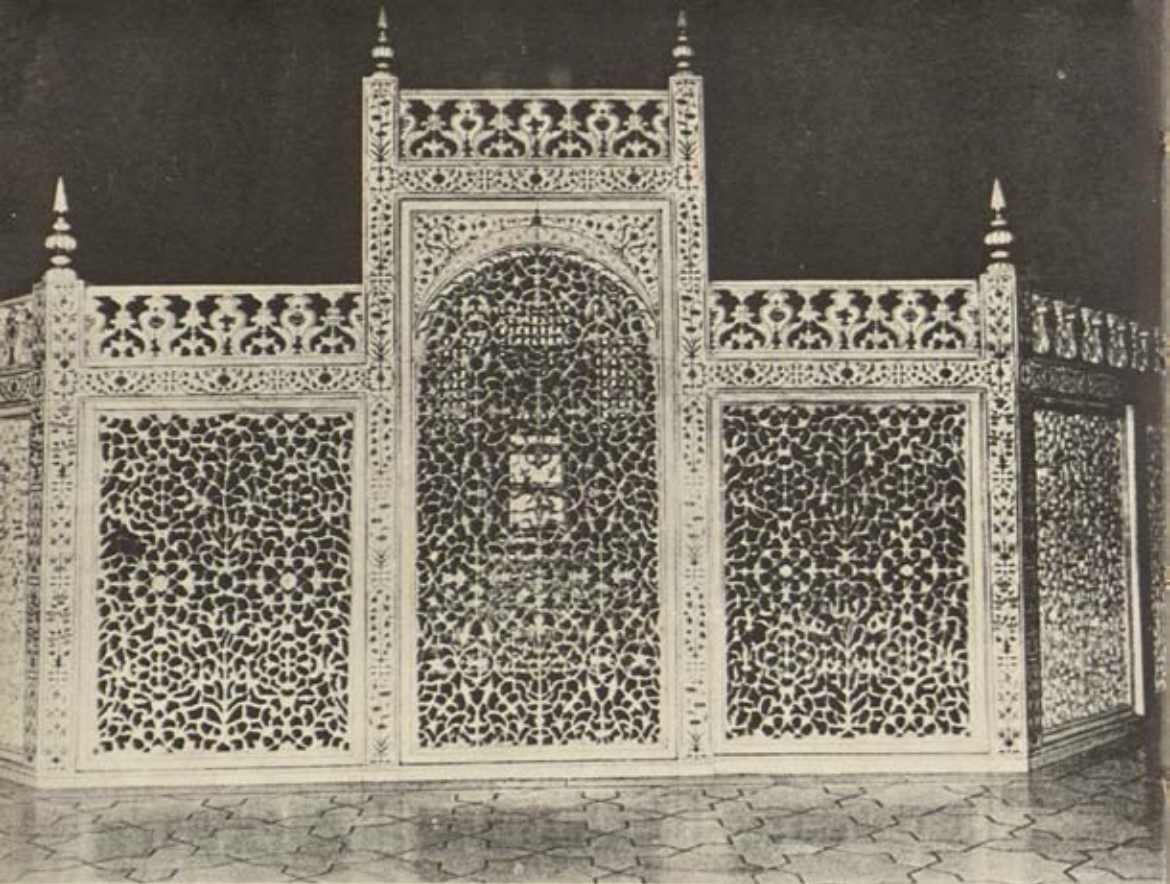
Kandāriya Mahādeva Temple Khajurāho

Detail of Khajurāho relief. Head of Vishnu.

Detail of Khajurāho relief.  
*Copyright Archeological Survey of India.*







Screen surrounding the cenotaph of Mumtāz Mahal in Tāj Mahal.

Detail of screen.





feet high; the semi-circular ceiling is in fact a second dome, built within the outer one.

#### PAINTING

The best specimens of ancient Indian painting can be seen at Ajantā, where Buddha, the Bodhisattvas and the *Jātaka* stories were the main subjects; incidental glimpses of palace life, processions, love-making, and drinking parties are also represented. Akbar, Jahāngīr, and Shāh Jahān were the great patrons of painters in Mughal times. In Jahāngīr's reign, indigenous, Persian, and European artistic trends all continued to give Mughal painting its distinctive character. Full-length portraits of the time of Jahāngīr, profile or three-quarter face, against a turquoise-blue or dark-green background, are very fine. Portraits of rare animals and birds were also painted with great skill.

#### THE LIFE OF THE PEOPLE

Hindu society fulfils itself in the performance of the duties assigned by tradition to each of the four *varnas* ('colours') or classes. The brahmins were to sacrifice, study and teach religious and legal texts. The kshatriyas, or warriors, had to support the secular ruler whose main duty, in theory, was to protect orthodox religious life. The vaishyas, the great majority of the people, pursued agricultural or commercial occupations. The śūdra class was only there in order to serve the three high classes.

The multiplicity of the Aryan tribes, and assimilation of the influx of Greeks, Kushānas, and Hūnas, who all found a place in the framework of the four classes, produced many sub-groups called *jāti* (fixed by birth) or castes. The non-Aryans who cleaned the filth in the towns, burned corpses and worked leather were excluded from all four classes and were called outcastes. They were the untouchables.

Modern Hindu reformers denounce caste distinctions. Gandhi gave the untouchables a status equal to the other castes and the Indian Constitution reserves special places for them in government service. In fact, increasing facilities for travel and the modern way of life have made caste distinctions impracticable in towns, though in rural areas caste prejudices have not yet died.

Until the eighteenth century the Muslims in India were conscious of their racial distinctions because of the wider advantages they could reap from them. The question of status among Muslims was determined on the basis of individual merit. The Saiyids, the descendants of Muhammad,

might enjoy greater respect, and various groups of artisans might behave like members of different castes, but the religion itself forbids such prejudices. The nineteenth and twentieth century Muslim reform movements have delivered a mortal blow to such earlier prejudices or pretensions.

Among the Hindus, marriage with even quite distant relations is forbidden. Marriages are solemnized at the house of the bride, in the courtyard under a pavilion. The accompanying ceremonies are very complicated, but the essential part is that the bride and groom, their garments tied together, should walk seven times around a sacred fire, accompanied by the chanting of Vedic *mantras* by the family priests.

The practice of self-restraint and service are the chief duties of a traditional Hindu wife. Formerly a high-caste Hindu widow might burn herself on her husband's funeral pyre and sometimes social pressure forced her to do so. The woman who did this was revered as a *sati* (suttee) a woman saint. The word is often wrongly applied to the rite itself. This

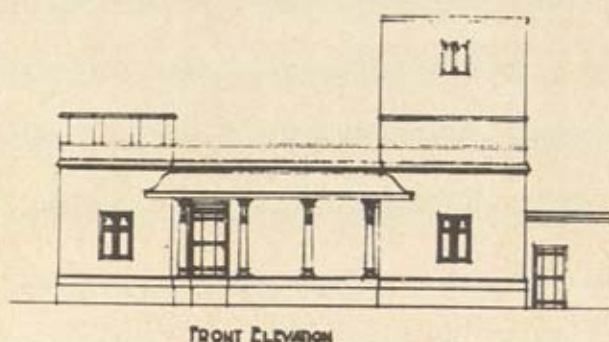


Ajantā. Wall painting from Cave XVII (early 5th century A.D.) showing a Court scene from the *Siṃhala Avadāna*. Probably depicts the ogress about to lure King *Siṃhakeśarī* into admitting her into his harem.

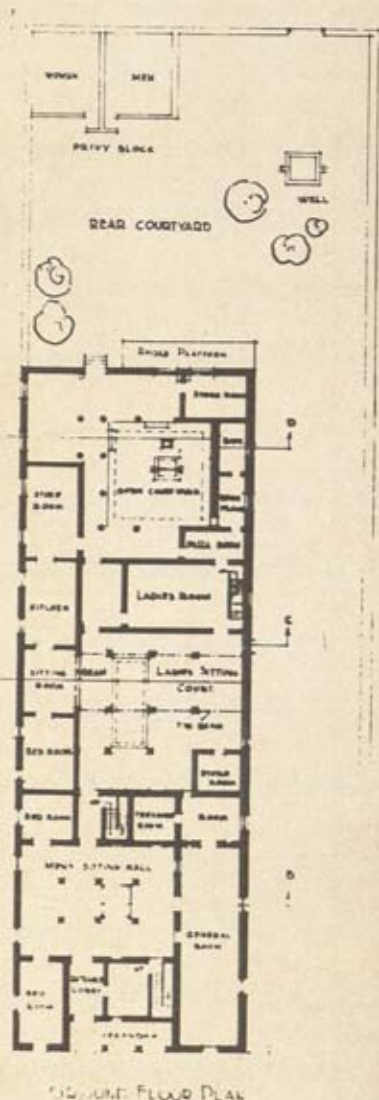


practice horrified Christian missionaries, and Rāmmohan and his associates argued that Hinduism did not sanction the burning of widows. Lord William Bentinck finally made the practice illegal and punishable by law.

Islām permitted marriages between cousins, and forbade only unions between the nearest blood relations. Muslim marriages are simple ceremonies, involving a contract between the bridegroom and the guardian of the bride.



Typical South Indian Hindu joint-family house, Madura. The ladies' rooms on the first floor can be reached without entering the main reception room, which is reserved for male members of the family and their guests. The second of the two courtyards in the more intimate part of the house has a well in the centre and cooking recesses around the sides. The gateway in the high wall surrounding the whole compound is large enough for an elephant to pass through on ceremonial occasions.





Urban housing, Madras.

Farmers winnowing barley in the traditional manner.





Hindus and Muslims both practised polygamy. Muslims were not permitted to marry more than four wives, but they could keep many concubines. There is no religious restriction for Muslims against marrying widows, but neither Muslims nor Hindus favour widows' remarrying. In post-Independence India, laws have abolished polygamy for Hindus and made it difficult for Muslims. Modern economic considerations and rationalistic ideas have made for monogamy everywhere in the sub-continent. Child marriages, which were formerly very common, are disappearing.

Originally every Hindu family and its property was not only joint, but indivisible. A joint family consists of a man and his wife, his married sons, their wives and their children, and his unmarried daughters and sons. They live under one roof, and only one kitchen is maintained. When a girl marries, she ceases to belong to her own joint family and becomes a member of her husband's.

Muslims in the sub-continent also lived in joint families, though Muslim law encouraged individual ownership, and provided facilities for the division of ancestral property.

#### THE VILLAGES

The basic unit of the economic and social system of the sub-continent is the village. Before the nineteenth century villages were autonomous as far as their internal affairs were concerned. Every village was self-contained, with its own blacksmith, carpenter, barber, and skinner of dead cattle. Each village artisan was given a plot of land for his own cultivation in his spare time with his family's help. The blacksmiths and carpenters made and repaired ploughs and other agricultural implements; the potter supplied an agreed number of pots to each family. The village and caste assemblies settled their disputes through arbitration. The increasing use of money and the introduction of the British administrative system, which reached down into village affairs, changed the basis of relationships in the village communities. The Indian government is trying to make the villages autonomous once more, though with the requirement that they operate within a definite legal framework. The success of the community development projects in South Asia is not commensurate with the money and energy bestowed upon them, but they are changing the values of life.

#### THE TOWNS

In ancient days, towns were generally founded near the banks of rivers, which provided an easy means of communication and helped promote trade and commerce, and some of them were also centres for Hindu pilgrimages. In mediaeval times a number of ancient towns declined. The Muslim

governors sometimes moved their seats of government from traditional centres to towns which had acquired commercial significance and strategic importance.

The commercial and administrative activities of the East India Company led to the growth of Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta, the last having originally been a group of insignificant villages. Some of the military cantonments such as Cawnpore (Kanpur) developed at a spectacular rate. Twentieth century industrial developments have contributed to the phenomenal increase in the towns. For example, Jamshedpur, once a village about 170 miles (or 273 km) from Calcutta, owes its growth to its iron and steel plants. As its industries developed it attracted many villagers, and also aboriginals such as the Santals, who contributed to making the town a flourishing industrial centre.

Every town in the sub-continent consists of two sections. The older part is dark, dingy and crowded; the newer part is openly planned with wide roads and flats and houses of colonial style. The houses in these newer sections have small gardens and are equipped with the furniture and amenities of modern life.

Thus the meeting of old and new in the sub-continent is epitomized in its towns. Jawaharlal Nehru observed rightly: 'I have become a queer mixture of the East and West, out of place everywhere, at home nowhere.'



## NOTES ON PRONUNCIATION OF SOUTH ASIAN LANGUAGES

The Indian phonetic system is very complex and it is impossible to pronounce many words really correctly without previous training. Only the barest essentials of pronunciation are given by the system of transliteration used here.

Sanskrit and the languages derived from Sanskrit have long and short vowels, the former in some cases indicated by a line over the letter. *Ā*, *ī*, and *ū* are pronounced approximately like the vowels in English *calm*, *machine*, and *rule* respectively. *E* and *o* are always long in most languages, pronounced rather like the vowels in *lake* and *hope*. The diphthongs *ai* and *au* are pronounced like the vowels in *high* and *how*. The short vowels, *a*, *i*, *u*, are like the vowels in *cup*, *bill*, and *bull* respectively. One should avoid the temptation to pronounce *a* as in *cat*, for this sound does not occur in any Indian language, though it is found in Sinhalese. Bengalis generally pronounce the short *a* like short *o* in *hot*.

In pronouncing the consonants the reader should remember that *kh*, *gh*, *th*, *dh*, *ph*, and *bh* are aspirated—that is to say they are pronounced with a stronger emission of breath than the corresponding letters without the *h*. Avoid the temptation to pronounce *th* as in *thing* and *ph* as in *phone*. *ś* is like *sh* in *show*.

Words introduced by the Muslims, whether Persian, Arabic, or Turkish have certain further sounds which do not occur in native Indian words. Good Urdū speakers usually pronounce *kh* as the *ch* in such Scottish words as *Loch*, and *gh* like a French *r*. The sign *ʾ* before a vowel in these words indicates a 'glottal stop', a sudden swallowing movement of the throat before pronouncing the sound. *Q* is pronounced like a *k*, but very deep in the throat.

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3

Mainland  
South-east Asia

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H.H.E.LOOFS





It is only in comparatively recent times that the region roughly east of India and south of China, but excluding Australia and the Pacific Islands, has been called 'South-east Asia'. This designation dates from the setting up in the Second World War of a 'South East Asia Command' to co-ordinate operations in this area, stretching from Burma to the Philippines and from Vietnam to Indonesia.

It was then for the first time in the English-speaking world that this vast region, with a total population larger than that of the U.S.A. or the U.S.S.R. and, more importantly, with a higher birth-rate than either of these super-powers, was seen as an entity in its own right, distinct from the rest of Asia. This fact had long been realized by the Chinese, however, who had always referred to South-east Asia in its entirety by the one name, *Nan Yang*, 'the Southern Seas'.

The reasons for looking upon South-east Asia as a single unit may not at first sight be very obvious, the most striking feature of this area being rather its cultural, political, ethnic, and linguistic diversity. Not only do opposing political systems at present confront each other more violently here than elsewhere, but also we find in South-east Asia, as nowhere else, practically all the major civilizations and religions of mankind existing side by side. Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos are Buddhist countries; Malaysia and Indonesia (with the exception of Bali where Hinduism survives, and of certain areas in eastern Indonesia with strong Protestant or Catholic minorities) are Muslim; the Philippines constitute the only predominantly Christian state in the whole of Asia; and most Vietnamese practise a unique religion consisting of a mixture of Confucianism, Taoism, and Mahāyāna Buddhism. The Indian, Chinese, Arabo-Islamic, and Western civilizations, too, have left their traces in South-east Asia. Virtually hundreds of distinct languages are, or have been, spoken at one time or the other somewhere in South-east Asia, different parts of which were subject to the influence, colonial or otherwise, of Portugal, Spain, Holland, Great Britain, France, and the United States, with a sprinkling of Italians, Danes, Germans, and Belgians also leaving their mark.

There does not appear to be a single common denominator encompassing the whole of South-east Asia. There is no common language, and no national language is spoken outside its own country, except in some

border regions, although the languages of Malaysia and Indonesia are mutually intelligible, as are those of Thailand and Laos. There is no common religion, nor is there a common political régime in South-east Asia, where kingdoms, states and republics of all shades co-exist. In many respects, therefore, South-east Asia is similar to Europe, that other, far western, 'annexe' of the Asian continent.

To discover distinctly South-east Asian characteristics, we have to bear in mind that most, if not all, of what makes the civilizations of South-east Asian countries look so different from one another nowadays has come from outside South-east Asia. Neither Islām nor Buddhism originated there, nor of course did Christianity or Confucianism. Communism is not a South-east Asian invention either. Indian and Chinese influences, and even some from further west and from Central Asia, were instrumental in shaping the civilizations found in South-east Asia today, and the more recent impact of the West goes without saying.

The peoples at the receiving end of these various influences throughout more than two thousand years of history were not only basically similar to each other in many respects, but also had already reached a stage of cultural evolution which enabled them to digest these Indian, Chinese and other influences and adapt them to local conditions in accordance with their own genius. In the process, completely new civilizations were produced, quite different from those of the cultural 'mother country' and often, in their turn, influencing other regions.

A glance at a physical map shows why the original evolution of South-east Asian civilizations must have been very similar from one end of the area to the other. The whole region is situated within the tropical or subtropical zone, subject to the monsoon winds and having the same lush flora and fauna. The annual mean temperature is practically the same from northern Burma (longitude 20° north) to Timor (10° south). Confronted with a picture of rice-fields or other South-east Asian landscapes, one is often unable to determine the country represented, unless some details of clothing or architecture provide a clue. Similar natural conditions (particularly in the lowlands where the bulk of the population is concentrated) made for similar solutions to economic and technological problems, and thus for a similarity in the early development of peoples in an area in which the use of vegetable matter (bamboo, wood, leaves, fibres, etc.) played a far greater rôle than in other parts of Asia or in Europe.

Then again, consisting as it does of several peninsulas and thousands of islands of various sizes (of which Indonesia is said to have 3000 and the Philippines more than 7000) South-east Asia is a region in which communications must always have been comparatively easy. Ideas could spread quickly, and constant population movement, trade and even warfare contributed to the relative homogeneity of the basic South-east Asian culture reflected in the Chinese name for it.





Water buffaloes working irrigated rice-fields: a scene typical of all lowland South-east Asia. On this level, life is similar throughout the lowlands of South-east Asia from Burma to the Philippines, from Vietnam to Indonesia.

A Thai scene such as could be found anywhere in South-east Asia. Because of the unique tropical climatic conditions prevailing in South-east Asia, greater use is made here than elsewhere of vegetal matter for construction, etc., which means that a scene such as this (in actual fact from the area where Thailand, Laos and Burma meet) is typical of all South-east Asia.





Rice is the main staple food throughout the area, and its cultivation is carried out with tools, and is accompanied by rituals and beliefs, which are basically the same everywhere, whether the individual cultivator is Buddhist, Muslim, or Christian. The same is true for many other beliefs, customs, attitudes, gestures and habits. So much so that, in spite of the various outside influences, a common South-east Asian character is recognizable in all of the outwardly dissimilar civilizations of the area, if only one takes the trouble to look a little below the surface. Pockets of different and less developed populations do of course exist in some mountainous parts of South-east Asia, but their importance for the cultural and political history of the area is negligible.

Thus it is not because of any inherent dissimilarity, but only for the sake of convenience, and also because of different historical development at a later period due to outside influences, that the mainland of South-east Asia (plus the Philippines) will be treated separately from the archipelago.

Instead of emphasizing the differences between religious beliefs or between nationalities, the main cultural distinction to be made in South-east Asia should be that between lowland and mountain peoples throughout the area. Outside cultural influences rarely extended beyond the lowlands, leaving the mountain dwellers to continue a way of life which had been common to the whole of South-east Asia before it was affected from outside. Indeed, mountain tribes from one end of South-east Asia to the other display a marked similarity in comparison with any resemblance they may have with the peoples of the lowlands, regardless of what national affinities they may have with the latter.

With the exception of Java and a few other regions where irrigated rice is grown in the mountains, the main difference between these two groups lies in the basic economy. In the lowlands, irrigated rice cultivation, which was possibly introduced from India or China about two thousand years ago, produces a high yield which can support large populations and elaborate civilizations, whereas most mountain tribes still practise slash-and-burn rice cultivation which can support only a limited population. In a few remote places in the Philippines, the Malay Peninsula, and north-west Laos, remnants of an even earlier, pre-agricultural stage of development survive in the form of small groups of hunters and food-gatherers. However, although on the map mountain tribes occupy large areas, nowadays they form only a small percentage of the total population of South-east Asia, and it is upon the lowland peoples that we must concentrate in examining the history and civilizations of the area.

Linguistically, the population of South-east Asia can be divided into certain groups, although it must be kept in mind that these do not necessarily coincide with present-day racial and national divisions, for the constant shifting of populations and several millennia of racial intermingling have effected great changes in language. The Tibeto-Burman languages



constitute one such group, spoken by the Burmese, Naga, Chin, Lolo, Akha, and other peoples in the north-western part of South-east Asia, and vaguely related to the language of the Karens of eastern Burma and western Thailand, and to that of the Mao and Yao peoples of northern Thailand, northern Laos, northern Vietnam, and southern China. The Thai-Kadai group of languages, stretching from south China into the Malay Peninsula, is principally represented by Thai, different dialects of which are spoken by the Thais of Thailand and the mountain Thais of North Vietnam, by the Laos, and by the Shans in Burma. Môn-Khmer languages are spoken by the Cambodians (or Khmers) and by the remnants of a formerly extensive Môn population in Burma and Thailand, as well as by several mountain tribes in South Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, northern Thailand, eastern Burma, and the Malay Peninsula. They are often grouped together under the heading of Austro-Asian, and bear a certain resemblance to Vietnamese and Muong (a kind of archaic Vietnamese spoken by a mountain people in North Vietnam).

However, the largest and most important linguistic family in South-east Asia is the widespread Malayo-Polynesian, or Austronesian, group. It includes Malay and its modernized form, Bahasa Indonesia or Indonesian, spoken by the majority of people, well over one hundred million of them, from the Malay Peninsula to New Guinea, and such minority languages as are still spoken in Malaysia and Indonesia mostly belong to this same family. The languages of the Philippines (the most important one of which is Tagalog) also belong to this group, as do those related to Cham, which are spoken by the survivors of the once-flourishing kingdom of Champā on the east coast of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula and by several mountain tribes in South Vietnam. As the name implies, the Polynesian languages are included, and so also is Malgache, the official language of Madagascar, which is quite similar to Malay.

The present distribution of racial and linguistic groups in South-east Asia is the result of the slow but prolonged migrations, generally from north to south, which are the main feature of the prehistory and early history of the region, and even continue to this day on a small scale in some parts of mainland South-east Asia. Ever since there were human beings in this area (and finds of *Pithecanthropus* or Java Man prove that this must have been at least for the last half million years) the Indo-Chinese Peninsula has been the main channel through which peoples from southern, central, and eastern Asia have reached Indonesia and, through it, Australia or the Pacific. Some groups continued on from Indonesia to the Philippines, while others migrated from the Asian mainland to Indonesia or Polynesia via the Philippines. Although we talk of migration 'waves', these movements must have been so slow that those taking part in them may not even have been aware of the fact that they were 'migrating'. Each such wave nevertheless eventually either drove the previous inhabitants



out of the area over which it spread, or simply absorbed them. The last and historically the best-documented of such population movements was that of the Vietnamese. Spreading from the Red River delta, the cradle of Vietnamese civilization, and overrunning the kingdom of Champā in the process, they reached the southernmost part of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula only about a century before the French arrived there.

*Pithecanthropus* is the earliest man so far to be discovered in South-east Asia. He was of short but powerful and muscular build, with jutting brows, a sloping forehead and large teeth. His brain capacity was definitely below the average of contemporary man, but he certainly did well in defending himself against dangerous animals and in making clever use of the possibilities nature offered him. He seems to have been similar to, although slightly less developed than, *Sinanthropus* or Peking Man, who lived in northern China up to about a quarter of a million years ago and used fire and simple stone tools. It is therefore surmized that *Pithecanthropus* man too had primitive stone tools, though none has actually been found in close association with any of the remains of this early human type.

Recent finds of fragments of mandibles, teeth, and skulls of the *Pithecanthropus-Sinanthropus* type in various parts of southern China and North Vietnam provide a link in the chain between Java and northern China, and suggest that this human type was once widespread throughout South-east and eastern Asia, and was in fact the earliest form of 'aborigine'. Roughly fashioned stone tools (core tools) mainly made from river pebbles, which are thought to have been used by this type of primitive man, have been found in Europe, North Africa, and northern China as well as throughout South-east Asia and northern India.

Such a wide distribution raises the question as to how these people came to be where their remains have been found. Perhaps this human type developed in northern China and spread to Java, or *vice versa*. Although these migrations, advancing only at the rate of one or two miles *per generation*, can hardly be considered a conscious movement in any given direction, nevertheless early man traversed vast distances. He was able to reach Java from the mainland during the Ice Age, when the glaciation of so much water meant that the sea-level dropped about 300 feet (or 100 metres) and exposed land-bridges linking the Indo-Chinese Peninsula with Sumatra, Java, and Bali.

The next human type to be revealed by fossil finds was also found in Java, in fact very near to where the first remains of *Pithecanthropus* man were discovered. This Ngandong or Solo Man inhabited Java in the third interglacial period (we are now in the fourth, which in all likelihood will end with another glaciation in about 40 000 years time). He has been compared with the famous Neanderthalian type, but has also been described as 'an enlarged *Pithecanthropus* type on the way to an advanced form'.



His tools also show a marked advance over those of *Pithecanthropus*. The use of the stone core was largely, but not altogether, replaced by the use of the chips flaked off the original core and then further sharpened through additional flaking. Animal bones were also fashioned into tools.

The glaciations of course only affected South-east Asia to the extent that it was slightly cooler and rainier than usual, and during the last one, that is from 80 000 to 15 000 years ago, yet another human type reached the Indonesian Archipelago: Wadjak Man, found at Wadjak in Java, the first representative of *homo sapiens*, the species to which modern man belongs. It was during this period, at a time now estimated as between 50 000 and 30 000 years ago, that the first ancestors of the aborigines reached Australia, and their similarity to Wadjak Man is so marked that many scholars accept without hesitation the idea of a more or less continuous line of evolution from *Pithecanthropus* through Solo and Wadjak Man to the earliest inhabitants of Australia. However, with the possible exception of some very small groups of Veddooids, looked upon by some scholars as degenerate remnants of an Australoid population, there are no longer any people of this type in South-east Asia today, which would suggest that they were driven out altogether or partly absorbed by newcomers.

Who could these newcomers have been? All the evidence now points to their having been a Melanesoid, or Melanesian-like people, whose remains have also been found in many places in South-east Asia. Unless they developed in South-east Asia itself out of the Australoid population, which is not impossible though rather unlikely, these Melanesoids (similar to the Papuans and Melanesians of today) must have come into the Indo-Chinese Peninsula in several 'waves', each of which probably mixed with previous and succeeding ones, thus resulting in an increasingly complex racial situation in this area. However, except in the easternmost part of Indonesia, there are no Melanesoids in South-east Asia today and it must be surmized that, like the Australoids before them, they were eventually mostly driven out into Melanesia, the small groups they left behind either being assimilated or developing in isolation. Some scholars regard the Negritos, a dark, fuzzy-haired people of obscure origin living in small groups in the remoter parts of the Philippines, as survivors of the Melanesoids, who once occupied the whole of South-east Asia and who may have been responsible for starting the Neolithic age there.

The change from the Palaeolithic or Old Stone Age to the Neolithic or New Stone Age was the most decisive event in human development since Java Man fashioned his first pebble-tool. For it meant a change from hunting and food-gathering, and a nomadic way of life enforced by the rapid depletion of food resources in any one given area, to the *production* of food through the deliberate cultivation of plants, necessitating a more settled community.



However, the term 'Neolithic Revolution' used in this connection is misleading, for it would appear that in South-east Asia this process was slow and gradual. Recent research indicates that certain plants may have been brought into cultivation at a much earlier date than has hitherto been assumed. The earliest horticulture carried out in north-eastern Thailand has now been dated back to as early as 10 000 B.C.—a further indication that South-east Asia may have been a centre from which innovations, like *Pithecanthropus* many millennia earlier, radiated out to other parts of Asia. Several scholars now ascribe these developments to the Late Hoabinhian, a prehistoric culture<sup>1</sup> beginning in the Upper Palaeolithic, the 'leading artifact' of which, the so-called short axe, is used to this day by Australian aborigines.

However, several thousand years more were needed for the evolution of what is usually considered the first fully Neolithic culture in South-east Asia, characterized by the *round axe*. This fully polished stone axe with a round or oval cross-section is similar to those still in use in many parts of New Guinea. The fact that, apart from southern China, Taiwan, and Japan, such axes have mainly been found in the eastern part of South-east Asia (in the Philippines and eastern Indonesia) seems to point to some kind of contact with Japan in the fourth millennium B.C.

Another thousand years or so later, the most characteristic South-east Asian Neolithic civilization is traditionally thought to have developed, about the third and second millennia B.C. This is the quadrangular adze civilization, using the finely polished stone axe with quadrangular cross-section found throughout virtually the whole of South-east Asia. The distribution of its variant, the shouldered (or tanged) adze, is limited to the mainland as far south as the central part of the Malay Peninsula, and to a few places in the Philippines, North Borneo, and Celebes. Because this distribution pattern roughly coincides with present-day language groups, one theory (suggested by the late Robert Heine-Geldern, an Austrian scholar) is that the quadrangular adze civilization was brought by the speakers of Malayo-Polynesian (or Austronesian) languages such as are still found in Indonesia today, while the shouldered adzes were associated with speakers of the Môn-Khmer (or Austro-Asian) languages persisting to this day on the mainland. But as both language groups are basically similar and can be grouped together in the 'Austrie' group, it is possible that this combined quadrangular and shouldered adze civilization formed a South-east-Asia-wide base for the common culture which was later to be acted upon by Indian and Chinese influences. It would seem that the disseminators of this culture were 'proto-Malay' or Nesian peoples similar to most of the present-day mountain peoples throughout South-east

<sup>1</sup> First discovered in the 1920's by the French archaeologist Madeleine Colani near the village of Hoa Binh in North Vietnam.



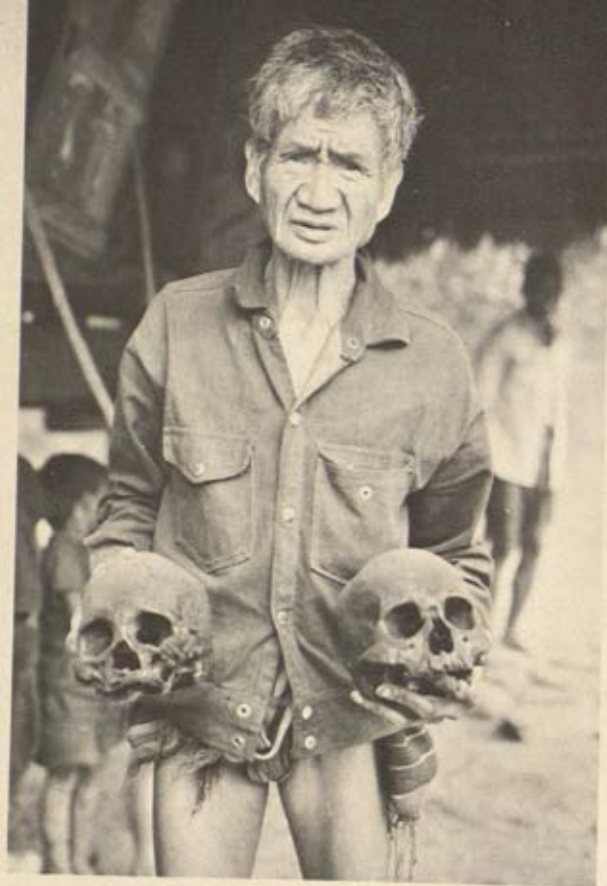
Asia.<sup>2</sup> Clearly, then, they were not the last people to migrate to South-east Asia, for the lowlands today are populated by people who are slightly different, the first of whom to arrive were the Deutero-Malays (the Pareoceans) followed by the Thais and the Vietnamese.

As far as can be judged from its sparse remains, this quadrangular adze civilization was already quite advanced. People probably practised a shifting, slash-and-burn method of millet cultivation, and perhaps they already also produced rice; they had domesticated animals such as pigs, fowls, dogs and probably buffaloes; they produced an elaborate pottery by the anvil-and-beater method, in the absence of the potter's wheel; and they knew how to make beads and rings out of stone and bone. They lived in wooden houses raised on posts. The stone beaters for the fabrication of the bark-cloth of which they made clothes have been found in many parts of South-east Asia. The Austronesian-speakers developed the outrigger canoe. All probably practised head-hunting, their religious beliefs centering around ancestor worship, animism, and a cult connected with the fertility of the earth. The custom of worshipping deities in elevated places such as on the tops of mountains, which is prominent in later Indian-inspired South-east Asian civilizations, also seems to have originated in this period.

More or less contemporary, but also overlapping into the Metal Age, was another South-east Asian cultural complex, the Megalithic ('large stones') which formed no clear-cut stratum and thus is difficult to date. Its main feature was the erection of large stones in order to enhance the social prestige of the persons, living or dead, whom they commemorated. This custom was often bound up with the belief that the living thereby acquired some part of the wisdom of the ancestors, who in their turn promoted the fertility of the soil, and of livestock, etc. Megalithic practices are still widespread among mountain peoples throughout South-east Asia.

As much research into the Neolithic Age in South-east Asia is currently under way and is continually producing new and unexpected results, the dates given here may soon need revision. In fact, scholars have already put back the date for the quadrangular adze civilization by several millennia, and consider it (and that of the round axe) a result of a local development on a Hoabinhian basis rather than as an import brought from outside by newcomers. Latest research in north-eastern Thailand, for instance, seems to prove that rice was cultivated there as early as the fourth millennium B.C., much earlier than the first rice known from China or India. The present state of our knowledge of South-east Asian prehistory

<sup>2</sup> These include the Was and the Palaungs of Burma, the Khas and the Moïs of the eastern part of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula, the Jakuns of the Malay Peninsula, the Igorots and the Ifugaos of northern Luzon, and the Bataks, Dyaks, and Toradjas of Sumatra, Borneo, and Celebes respectively.



An Ifugao (formerly a head-hunter) from the mountains of Northern Luzon, Philippines, displays his trophies. Head-hunting, apparently a typical South-east Asian custom, was formerly widespread throughout the area, being attested from a time at least as long as 100,000 years ago.

is such that no definite statements regarding the age, distribution and exact sequences of these cultures can yet be made.

This same consideration applies to the beginning of the 'Metal Age' in South-east Asia, a term which is not altogether justified in view of the minimal changes in the way of life effected by the introduction of metal. Just as hunting and food-gathering still played a part in the economy of Neolithic societies long after agriculture was introduced, so the use of stone tools continued well into historic times, long after the appearance of metal ones.

The Dongson civilization is traditionally regarded as the first metal-using culture in South-east Asia; it is named after a region in North Vietnam where the first significant bronze objects were excavated well before the last World War. Among these finds were large bronze drums of a kind found throughout the Indo-Chinese Peninsula and Indonesia. The elaborate engraved decoration of these drums is very informative about



the way of life and ritual practices of those who used them. The northern drums have been dated back to c. 600 B.C., and the southern ones to the last centuries B.C. However, similar drums were still being manufactured in Thailand and Laos in the last century, and a smaller variety of the same kind of drum is in use in the eastern part of the Indonesian Archipelago



Reconstruction of a four-legged pot excavated at Kok Charoen site, central Thailand, dating from about the second millennium B.C. Decorated with shell-incisions above and cord-markings below. Hand made.

to this day, while Dongson decorative motifs are still found in the art forms of some mountain tribes as far away as New Guinea. Amongst other things, these decorations show houses with saddle roofs of a type perpetuated in some parts of Indonesia (Minangkabau, for instance) which, although it is nowadays known as the 'typical Chinese' roof, only found its way to China in the third century A.D., after the Han Dynasty.

Interesting conjectures have been raised by another feature of the decorations on the bronze drums. This is their intriguing resemblance to decorative elements of the Eastern European Iron Age, of pre-classical Greece, and even of the Scandinavian Bronze Age. This similarity, which can be matched as far as music, tools and weapons, ship-building, social organization, mythology, etc. are concerned, has given rise to the 'Pontic migration' theory (again Robert Heine-Geldern's) according to which in the ninth and eighth centuries B.C. there was a migration from Eastern Europe (mostly from the Black Sea area) into Eastern Asia, which sparked off the Dongson civilization. Some support is given to this theory by an account in Chinese sources of the fall in 771 B.C. of the then capital, Hao in northern China, to tall, fair-haired 'Western Barbarians'. Moreover,

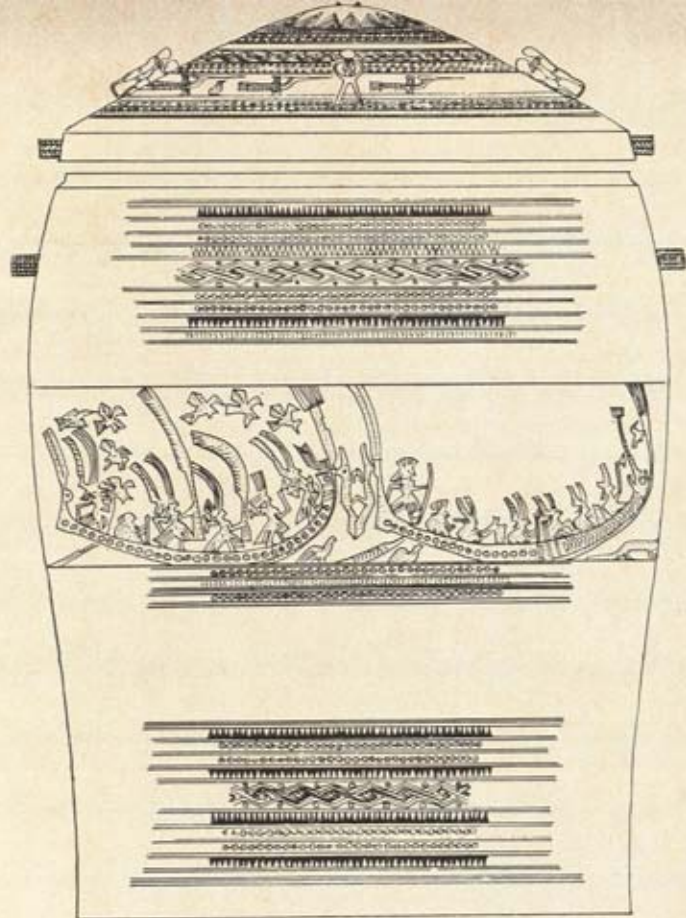


Bronze Dongson drum, type Heger I (National Museum, Phnom-Penh).

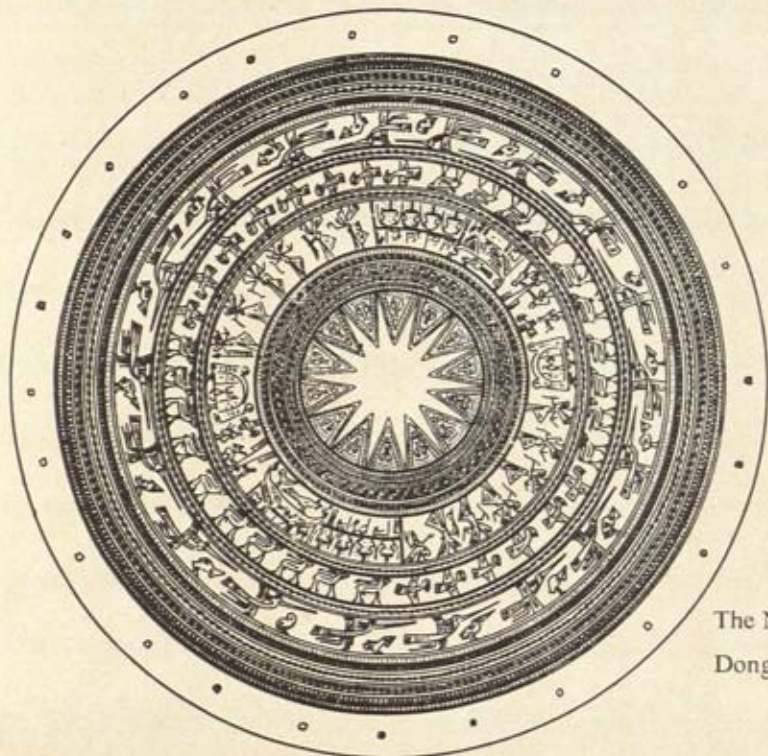
the first European travellers in the Indo-Chinese Peninsula noted the presence of fair-haired, blue-eyed individuals amongst the mountain peoples in the northern part of this region. However, this migration theory is far from being generally accepted, and many scholars regard the Dongson civilization as inspired by China, explaining the resemblances to European civilizations as resulting from trade connections. But recent finds of pre-historic bronze and copper objects, or of their moulds, in north-eastern Thailand could indicate that it was there, and not in China, that the use of metal first developed in Eastern Asia, and at a date much earlier than hitherto thought possible, the third, or perhaps the fourth, millennium B.C. This could even mean that this area was the earliest metallurgical centre in the world. But again this theory is not yet universally accepted, and more finds are needed to make it a certainty.

Leaving aside such controversial questions, it is clear that the next major cultural influences to affect South-east Asia, which were to shape civilizations in this area for at least a millennium to come, found the ground well prepared. For when the Chinese and Indian influences began to make themselves felt in the last centuries B.C. and the first centuries A.D.,





Big bronze vessel from Đào-thỉnh  
Yên-Bái, North Vietnam.



The Ngọc-lũ' drum tympanum.  
Dongson style.

respectively, it was not a matter of a clash between civilization and savagery, but rather of the acceptance (voluntary as far as the Indian influence is concerned, somewhat forced on the Chinese side) of certain cultural features by the comparatively highly developed peoples of the lowlands and more accessible areas of South-east Asia.

#### THE COMING OF HISTORY: VIETNAM AND SUVARNABHŪMI

The term 'history' is usually applied only to events recorded in writing, whether they be the significant deeds of individuals or arise from the interaction of human groups. According to this criterion, the history of South-east Asia only began with the written records of its two great neighbours, India and China, or with such of them as have been preserved up to the present day. Before coming under the influence of China on the one side and India on the other, the peoples of South-east Asia do not appear to have had a script of their own. Until that time their epics, legends, and traditions must have been transmitted orally, albeit with an astonishing fidelity, over the centuries. Indeed this is still the case with many of the South-east Asian hill tribes, who have no script even now, and who there-



Bronze lamp stand from Tomb No. 3, Lạch-tru'ông, Thanh-Hóa Province, North Vietnam. Third or fourth century A.D. The figure clearly shows Vietnamese characteristics, although the country was at that time part of China.

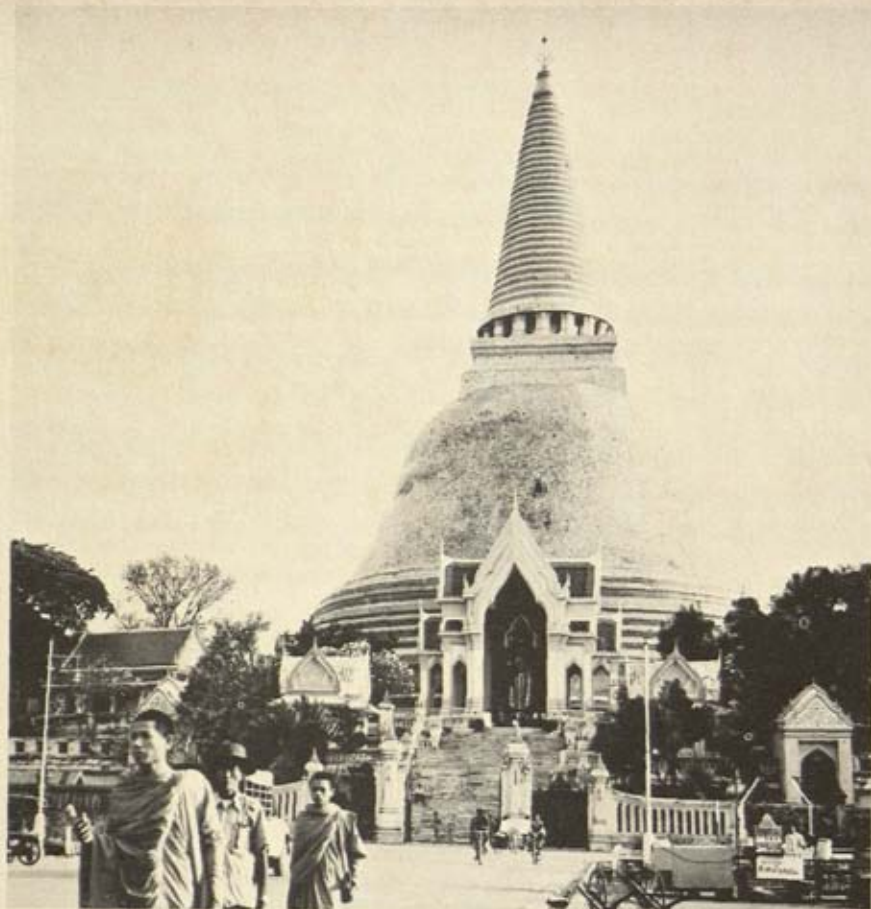


fore strictly speaking still live in an age of prehistory, as do most of Australia's aborigines.

The earliest written records of events in South-east Asia are Chinese accounts of what was going on in the southernmost part of the empire during the last centuries B.C., when China herself was in the process of expanding towards the south. To this day the southern part of China is mostly populated by non-Chinese peoples such as the Thai. One of these tribes, the Yüe (Viêt, in Vietnamese) seems to have been the ancestor, or at least one of them, of the Vietnamese of the present time. They extended southwards to the Red River delta, which was to become the heartland of Vietnamese civilization. The exact origin of the Vietnamese people and language is still unknown, but it would seem that various elements, having affinities with the Thai, Môn-Khmer, or Indonesian peoples, somehow combined to form a completely new and individual Vietnamese people, language and culture, which from the outset were totally different from the Chinese. However, what is now North Vietnam (the southern part at that time still being occupied by other peoples) came under Chinese influence when it had a well developed bronze-using



Modern North Vietnamese popular print portraying the Trưng Sisters leading an uprising against the occupying Chinese in 40 A.D. This popular woodcut print (*estampe*) is based on old designs illustrating a centuries-old tradition said to go back to the Ly Dynasty (1010-1225), or even earlier. (Colours: black, yellow, green, red and purple).



Phra Pathom Chedi, Nakhon Pathom, Thailand, with two Buddhist monks in the foreground. The foundations of Phra Pathom Chedi may go back to the last centuries B.C., but the building in its present form is the result of the 19th century restorations by King Mongkut and King Chulalongkorn. The height from ground level to the top of the spire is 393 feet (118.6 metres).

civilization of its own, and then in 111 B.C. under actual Chinese domination, which was to remain for more than a thousand years.

With the establishment of Chinese rule, Vietnam also entered the historical era, now being included regularly in Chinese annals and other historical sources. These sources leave no doubt as to the un-Chinese character of this southern people, who chewed betel, tattooed their bodies and used poisoned arrows. Many of the cultural traits noted by the Chinese have remained typically Vietnamese to this day and are as opposed to Chinese custom as they were two thousand years ago. Also carefully noted in the Chinese reports and chronicles is the fact that the Vietnamese never acquiesced to Chinese rule and rebelled whenever the occasion presented itself.

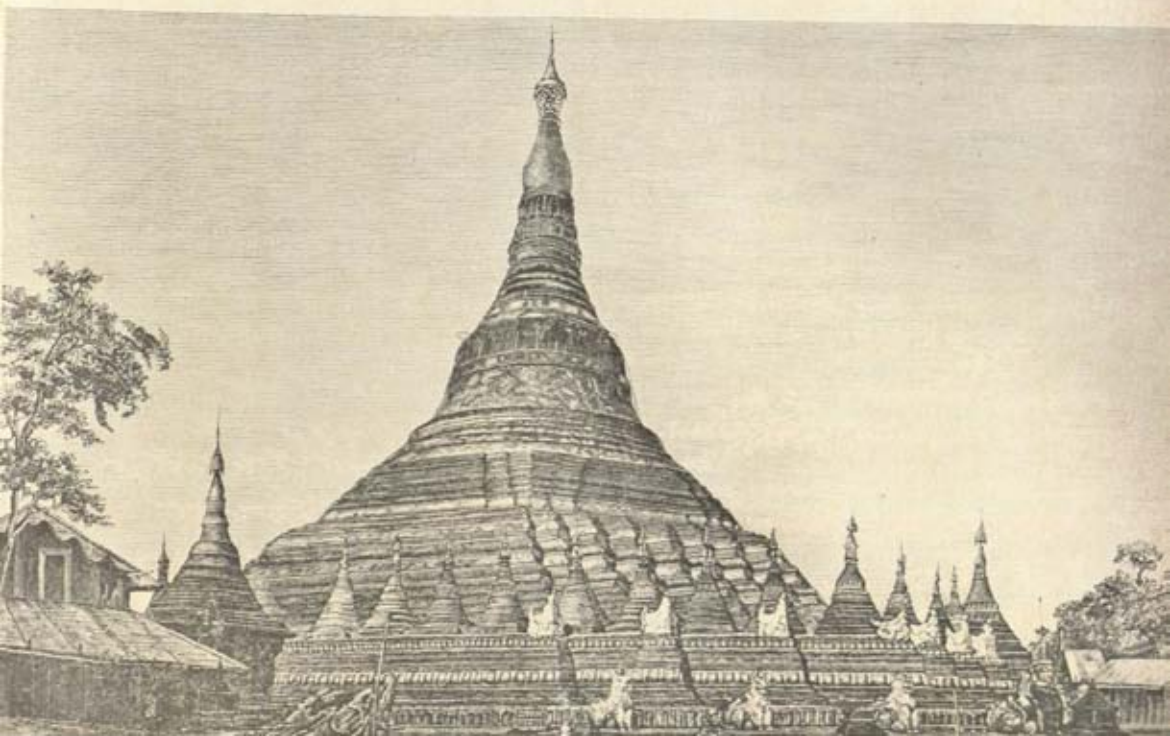


The other side of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula, the lower Menam Basin (now Thailand) may have entered the historical scene even earlier than did Vietnam, for the Ceylonese chronicles tell how the famous Indian Buddhist king Aśoka, (third century B.C.), sent missionaries to various countries to spread the Buddhist doctrine. Two of these, the monks Sona and Uttara, it is said, went to Suvarnabhūmi, the Land of Gold, a mainland South-east Asian country whose exact location has not yet been identified. According to a recent claim, its capital was the present Nakhon Pathom in central Thailand (about 40 miles, or 60 km, west of Bangkok). While this theory is little known and still less accepted, it is quite a likely one, being borne out by the many relics similar to those of Aśokan times found in Nakhon Pathom, today the site of the largest *stūpa* (Buddhist tower-like structure) in this part of South-east Asia. If this assumption is correct, it would mean that not only the Red River delta in North Vietnam, but also the Menam delta in Thailand became part of history in the third or second century B.C. with their first mention in written records.

#### THE 'INDIANIZATION' OF MAINLAND SOUTH-EAST ASIA

As in Indonesia, and presumably for the same reasons, so in the Indo-Chinese Peninsula, the Indian cultural influence made itself more strongly felt during the first centuries A.D. and its effects are still apparent today

19th century engraving of the Shwe Dagon *stūpa*, Rangoon. The Shwe Dagon *stūpa* has been said to be the highest *stūpa* in South-east Asia, although the same claim could more legitimately be made for the Phra Pathom Chedi in Thailand.





in certain features of all the civilizations of this area, including even the Vietnamese, though here its effects are much less visible. Here too, many of the first signs of this influence were connected with Buddhism, which may therefore have already been known in this region for some centuries, Hinduism as such being more influential at a later period. However, as Buddhism has a Hindu background and contains many Hindu elements, it is not easy to distinguish between the parts played by each in leaving the first Indian imprint on South-east Asia.

It has often been asserted that this Indian influence at the beginning of the Christian era came with a large-scale Indian migration movement, or invasion, resulting in the occupation and colonization of South-east Asia. Hence the frequent use of designations such as 'Greater India' or 'Colonial India' for South-east Asia. However, this contention cannot be correct, mainly for the following three reasons.

Firstly, the actual presence of large numbers of Indians in South-east Asia and the political domination of the area by India would have affected the physical composition of the population, and no traces of this can be found either in the population today or in archaeological evidence from the past. Secondly, an Indian presence of such proportions would also have made a greater mark on languages and customs than has been the case. None of the distinctive features of the Indian cuisine, for instance, with its emphasis on curry, milk products and so on, has been adopted by any South-east Asian people, as would surely have been the case had they been subjected to a long and massive Indian occupation, especially as the climatic conditions would have been favourable for the production of the same plants and domesticated animals as in most parts of India. And thirdly, although then physically occupying only a small part of South-east Asia (what is now North Vietnam) China considered herself—and was considered by peoples living in the area—the ultimate political overlord over the entire *Nan Yang*. The whole of South-east Asia, in other words, was politically speaking situated in the 'sphere of interest' of the Chinese, and the latter would surely have mentioned in their annals an attempt by an outside power such as India to occupy part of their domain, and would have resisted any such attempt vigorously. As Chinese chronicles are mute on this point, we must conclude that no political colonization took place.

That there was a strong *cultural* influence from India is incontestable, although it may legitimately be asked how large a proportion of the various populations was really affected by it. Recent research into the customs, rites and mythology of Cambodia and other mainland South-east Asian countries would seem to indicate that the Indian cultural influence was mainly confined to the ruling classes, the bulk of the population remaining more or less untouched and retaining most of their pre-Indian beliefs and customs to this day.

Once it has been established that the only Indian influence to reach



South-east Asia was a cultural one, the question still remains as to why it came at all. In fact there are just about as many answers to this question as there are scholars dealing with it: trade, the need for luxury goods, technological or religious motives, the urge for adventure and exploration, the marriage of the daughters of local chiefs with Indians, the necessity for 'political refugees' from India to find greener pastures, the voyages of South-east Asians to India, and the like. Although the originator of each of these theories considers that it alone is valid, in fact it would appear that a combination of several such reasons contributed to the transmission of Indian influence to South-east Asia.

The difficulty in assessing the ways in which such transmission occurred is aggravated by the fact that the first signs of this influence, such as inscriptions, monuments or single objects, show its *results* rather than *how* it developed; results, furthermore, which already differ widely from the Indian model, having been adapted and modified by local artists and craftsmen.

#### THE INDIANIZED KINGDOMS OF MAINLAND SOUTH-EAST ASIA

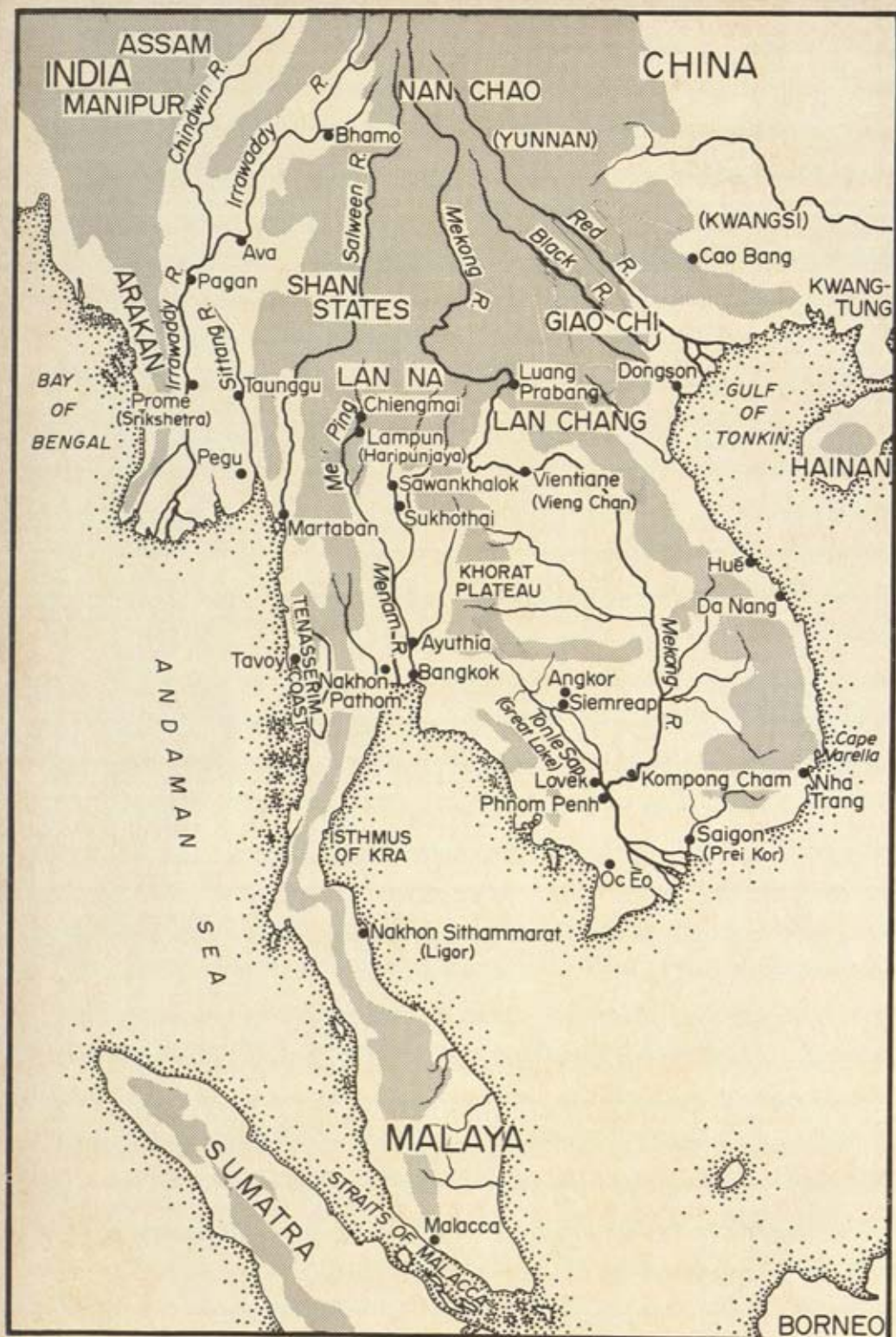
Although not itself the result of any political action, Indian influence nevertheless had important political consequences in South-east Asia in that it led to the formation of several Indianized kingdoms. For it was only by the adoption of the Indian idea of kingship and all that went with it that an indigenous tribal group was able to develop into an organized state, with a cosmology and appropriate rituals to constitute a state religion. Presumably non-religious technological or economic factors, such as new weapons, agricultural implements, and methods of doing things, also played a rôle in consolidating the power of such a newly-formed kingdom. But it is not easy for us to reconstruct how this transformation actually took place.

In the case of Funan<sup>3</sup> the earliest of these kingdoms to be documented, and for at least half a millennium the most important, it is not very difficult to imagine how it happened, however, as legend maintains that Funan was founded by an Indian brahman who married the local female chieftain. It would have been this brahman, therefore, who, single-handed, introduced Indian beliefs and rituals. But as there were no Indian women, this first dynasty had by the next generation already become a predominantly indigenous one.

From the second to the sixth century A.D., Funan was the paramount power not only in mainland South-east Asia but also in the archipelago. It seems to have included the southern and central part of the Indo-Chinese

<sup>3</sup> This name is a Chinese rendition of the Old Khmer or Cambodian word for 'mountain', and seems to have been part of the title of the kings, i.e., 'King of the Mountain'.





Historical map of Mainland South-east Asia.



Peninsula as well as practically the whole of the Malay Peninsula except for the southernmost part, and would therefore have dominated the Gulf of Siam and presumably also the western Indonesian waters. The importance of Funan as a sea-faring and trading nation is attested by finds made at Oc-Éo, situated in what is today South Vietnam, not far from Rach Gia, which must have been one of its main ports. Signs have been found here of trade not only with India and China, but also with Persia and even Greece and Rome, thus corroborating Chinese accounts of a Roman mission to eastern Asia in the second century A.D.

Chinese records also tell of Funanese trade in gold, silver, and silk, and of the manufacture of gold and silver articles in Funan. In addition, they give information about the inhabitants and their customs which point to an astonishing similarity to the present-day mountain tribes in north-east Cambodia and South Vietnam. Indian influence is attested not only where trade is concerned but also in the religious field. Hinduism and Buddhism appear to have co-existed in Funan, which was the earliest centre in South-east Asia for the diffusion of Indian cultural elements.

Although the precise perimeter of the political influence of Funan at the height of its power is not known, it can be reasonably accurately surmized; but the exact location of its earliest heartland is still a mystery. Traditionally it has been thought to have been somewhere in south-eastern Cambodia, but a new theory has it that the lower Menam Valley, north-west of Bangkok, is a more likely possibility. Obviously much archaeological work remains to be done before the history of Funan is fully elucidated.

The existence in the second century of another indigenous kingdom on the other side of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula, on what is now the central Vietnamese coast, is attested by contemporary Chinese sources. This was the state of Lin-yi, later known as Champā, which was soon also to be subject to strong cultural influence from India, as is shown by Sanskrit inscriptions found just south of Da Nang bearing witness to the introduction of Hinduism and Indian concepts of kingship. As is the case with Funan, Chinese reports tell us something of the habits and appearance of the people of Lin-yi who are described as cruel and warlike barbarians, being armed with bamboo spears and cross-bows, and having deep-set eyes, straight prominent noses, and black frizzy hair. Here again, the resemblance to present mountain tribes is striking. They used various metals, were skilled gold- and silversmiths, and had a great variety of musical instruments. Rather than see them as savages or 'barbarians' (the standard Chinese name for non-sinicized foreigners) we should imagine the inhabitants of Lin-yi as a fairly civilized people possessing presumably a Dongson-style culture. As the disappointed Chinese noted, they took advantage of their difficult terrain to avoid submission to Chinese rule. There is no doubt that they are the same people as the Chams, about whom we shall hear more below.



In the middle of the fourth century an interesting episode in the cultural history of Funan occurred, as this is the time at which we suddenly find an Indo-Scythian on the throne of this kingdom. This fact may account for the Iranian influence which can be seen, together with that of India, in Funanese art of this and the following centuries.

In the second half of the sixth century, the kingdom of Funan was attacked by one of its former northern dependencies, Chenla. These attacks would appear to have originated in what is now southern Laos, and in its wake a new people reached the south of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula: the Kambujas, whose name is still preserved in that of the country to which they penetrated. Where exactly they came from, how different they were from the indigenous Funanese, and what they looked like, is still unknown. The difference was probably not very marked.

Before long Chenla had taken over from Funan all its dependencies except for some of the more distant vassal states, which took advantage of the changeover to assert their independence. It must be kept in mind that communications were very slow in those times. Even today, with relatively good roads and fast cars, it takes up to a week to cover the distance from the lower Mekong region, say, to the middle of the Malay Peninsula. In those days it must have taken a very long time indeed, far too long for a central government to keep things under control in distant places. Funan's end was thus not brought about by a powerful enemy from outside, but from within the country itself.

With the rise of Chenla, the first real Khmer state came into existence in the area now Cambodia, but it is doubtful whether this change should be regarded as also implying a complete transformation of the population. While until that time the stone inscriptions were only in Sanskrit, from the seventh century on they are in Old Khmer, the forerunner of the Cambodian language. The question of the racial origin of the Chenla people is further complicated by the fact that Cham inscriptions dating from the fifth century have been found in southern Laos, the very heartland of Chenla, which indicates that there was some sort of Cham—and thus Austronesian, not Austro-Asiatic speaking—suzerainty over that area.

Very soon after taking over from Funan, at least in the central part of this former empire, Chenla split in two: Land (or Upper) and Water (or Lower) Chenla, each having a very turbulent history, the details of which are not yet fully known.

The description of Chenla in the Chinese chronicles says that its north 'is mountainous with many deep valleys. In the south there are large swampy areas, and it is so hot that one never sees snow or hoar-frost. The soil exhales pestilential odours and is full of venomous insects. People cultivate rice, rye, and fine and coarse millet'. It was thus on a simple peasant economy that the tremendous architectural and artistic achievements of Angkor in the following centuries were to be based.



One of the states which came into being in the sixth century as the result of the decline of Funan—like those many small national states which appeared after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire—was one the name of which is given by a contemporary Chinese source as T'o-lo-po-ti, and which was said to be situated between Burma and Cambodia. If one takes into account that there is no *r* in Chinese, it becomes easier to see that this name corresponds to the Sanskrit Dvāravatī, by which this country is now usually known. Its territory included most of the fertile Menam plain in present central Thailand, stretching into northern Thailand on one side and into the Malay Peninsula on the other. Its inhabitants, however, were mainly Môn, a population similar to the Khmers or Cambodians who once occupied vast areas in the central and western parts of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula until absorbed by the Burmese and the Thais. Today only small minority groups of Môn are left in southern Burma and the Bangkok region. The earlier extent of the Môn is attested by inscriptions in their language and also by a characteristic style of Buddha images which seems to represent the local physical type and is very similar to Khmer sculpture, obviously also representing the native population.

The exact origins of Dvāravatī are obscure, but it is clear that this kingdom had a strongly Buddhist civilization, thus possibly continuing the tradition begun by the missionaries sent out by the Indian king Aśoka about 800 years earlier. As already mentioned, a new theory sees in Dvāravatī not a former faraway possession of Funan which became independent when the central power weakened, but the heartland of this empire itself, the cultural heritage of which it carried on. A surprisingly large quantity of 'Funanese' objects, similar to those discovered at Oc-Éo, have indeed been found in the lower Menam region.

Dvāravatī, its economy based solidly on a well developed rice agriculture in a very fertile region, remained a powerful Buddhist kingdom for the next five centuries. Its art and architecture must have been almost entirely in the service of the state religion, as remains consist nearly exclusively of Buddha figures in stone or bronze, stone 'Wheels of the Law', and the bases of brick-built *stūpas* or *chedis*, monuments prominent to this day in the Buddhist countries of South-east Asia. Dvāravatī art was the first major Buddhist art in mainland South-east Asia and influenced artistic development in the area for a long time after the end of Dvāravatī as a political entity. But recent excavations show that the so-called minor arts, the crafts, and generally speaking the technology of Dvāravatī were also highly developed—higher than hitherto suspected—as finds include, in addition to a great number of small animal figurines, innumerable beads and objects made of ivory, bone, bronze, and iron, and decorated pottery, both handmade and turned on the wheel, together with unmistakable signs of the earliest local manufacture of glass and glazes in entire South-east Asia.



During the eleventh century Dvāravatī started to decline under pressure from the Khmers who, advancing from the east, brought large parts of this kingdom under their influence, thus adding Hindu religious elements to Buddhist ones; Buddhism, firmly implanted in this area, was by no means eliminated, but probably continued to be the religion of 'the masses', though at that time the population cannot have been very dense.

During the same time the kingdom of Champā, on the eastern coast of the peninsula, was developing a high civilization under Indian cultural influence, although there is little evidence of direct contacts with India. The political centre of the Cham kingdom seems first to have been situated in the region of the present-day Hué, at the northernmost tip of what is now South Vietnam; later it was south of present Da Nang, and at the end of the eighth century it was shifted still further to the south near the present Nha Trang. The main remains of Cham civilization visible to this day are many large brick towers with elaborate decoration, and stone statues and reliefs of excellent workmanship, attesting to a local genius (Coedès calls it 'a barbarian vitality which cannot be accounted for by any known factor') which asserts forcefully this civilization's artistic individuality.

The difficulty in assessing the sources of Cham culture is that nobody knows where the Chams themselves came from. They are, together with some present mountain tribes adjacent to the former Champā, the only people on the Indo-Chinese Peninsula to speak an Austronesian language (i.e., one related to Malay or Indonesian). Are they the remnants of a former Austronesian-speaking population once occupying parts of the peninsula, who were later pushed into Indonesia by advancing Austro-Asiatic (Môn-Khmer) speakers? Or could it be that at a time as yet unknown they migrated from an island of the Indonesian Archipelago to the eastern coast of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula? The latter solution is by far the more likely one, as it would otherwise be difficult to account for the precisely limited wedge-like area of these Austronesian speakers in an otherwise Austro-Asiatic speaking region. If they had been remnants of a former more widely spread population one would expect to find small pockets of them scattered over a larger area.

The Chams, like the inhabitants of Lin-yi before them, are described by contemporary Chinese sources in terms clearly suggestive of the present mountain tribes in South Vietnam who, in turn, are of course very similar to other mountain tribes throughout South-east Asia, Indonesia included. Ethnically the Chams may thus be looked upon as a coastal and seafaring variety of Austronesian-speaking Nesiot (Proto-Malay) 'mountain' tribes—not unlike the present sea-Dyaks of Borneo, for example—who became distinct from their brethren through the Indian influence they received, which enabled them to transform their loose tribal groupings into a well organized kingdom and to build up a brilliant civilization.





Burmese-style Buddhist monastery near Tak, Thailand. A very distinctive multi-storeyed, pagoda-like tower of a type otherwise peculiar to Burma is seen here.

For several centuries the Chams were the easternmost outpost of Indianized civilizations on the Indo-Chinese Peninsula, meeting head-on with the expanding southernmost representatives of the Chinese-inspired civilizations, the Vietnamese, whose advance to the south they blocked and by whom they were eventually overrun and absorbed. The reason for this defeat will be examined later; suffice it here to say that it was certainly not because the Chams were then a soft, degenerate people.

That Indonesia, or rather parts of the archipelago at present bearing this name, played an important rôle in the political and cultural life of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula at some time preceding the ninth century is attested by several reliable sources. The art forms of Champā, Dvāravatī, and to a certain extent also of Chenla, and later of the Angkor kingdom, show signs of a more or less pronounced Indonesian influence. We know from Chinese accounts that several times during the second half of the eighth century 'black and ugly pirates from the southern islands' raided



coastal settlements of Vietnam and Champā, but as will be seen in the next chapter, it is also clear that Java exerted for an unknown time and to an unknown extent a certain political suzerainty over Chenla, for the foundation of the latter's successor state of Angkor in 802 was accompanied by a formal declaration of independence from Java.

This Indonesian intervention in mainland South-east Asian affairs has to be seen in a broader context, going beyond purely political considerations. The name Funan appears to be derived from the title of the ruler of this country, 'King of the Mountain'. According to the magico-religious beliefs then prevailing in South-east Asia, presumably based on much older beliefs, the bearer of this title was considered 'Universal Ruler', a sort of emperor to whom was due the obedience of all known countries in the area, excluding of course China and India. The disappearance of Funan as a great power corresponds to the sudden appearance of a dynasty in Java bearing exactly the same title of 'King of the Mountain' (though in Sanskrit and not in Old Khmer) the Śailendras. Hence it is tempting to see in the latter the inheritors of the Funanese claim to Universal Rulership. Thus the Śailendras attempted to extend their domination over as much of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula as possible, but the only area where this attempt seems to have been crowned with a measure of success was precisely the central part of the former claimant to this title, Funan. Far from being ordinary pirates, these 'black and ugly' raiders were probably sailors of the Royal Śailendra Navy on official missions. We must remember that for the Chinese all non-Chinese are ugly by definition, and if they are ever so little darker than the Chinese themselves they are qualified as black. Significantly, the only objects they seem to have taken away from Cham sanctuaries were the royal lingas, the emblems of Śaivism and, just like flags nowadays, symbols of king and country about which a pirate would scarcely have bothered. As the Śailendras were militant Buddhists, one could even interpret these raids as part of a Holy War against the unbelieving Hindus.

#### THE INDO-CHINESE PENINSULA IN THE SHADOW OF ANGKOR

An early tenth century Arab writer relates the following interesting story, said to have happened more than a century before his time. The Khmer king imprudently expressed the desire to see the head of the Mahārāja of Java on a platter in front of him. Unfortunately, these words reached the ears of the said Mahārāja, who swiftly invaded the Khmer kingdom, seized the king, cut off his head, and returned to his country after having charged a Khmer minister with finding a new king. Later he sent the preserved head back to Cambodia with appropriate warnings. Whatever the authenticity of this story, it gives further evidence that towards the end of the eighth century Chenla had become a vassal state of Java, although there are no signs of a Javanese occupation of the country.





The Bakong at Rolous, near Angkor (881 A.D.). The Bakong at Rolous was built in 881 A.D. by King Indravarman, the second ruler to succeed after Jayavarman II, the founder of the Angkorian Empire. This is the first example of the artificial 'temple-mountain' prevalent in later Angkorian religious architecture. Here stone is already in use for the terraced 'hill', while brick is still being used for the associated tower (left foreground). The tower on top of the artificial hill is a later (10th-11th century?) addition, the original sanctuary having disappeared. There is a noticeable similarity to Borobudur.

Some time in the last decade of this century a Khmer prince, who may have been kept there as a hostage, returned from Java to Cambodia, possibly with the mission to rule the country on behalf of the Śailendras. He rapidly unified his troubled fatherland, of which, in 802—two years after the crowning of Charlemagne on the other side of the world—he declared himself the independent King Jayavarman II. This declaration of independence took place in the presence of the royal brahmins on top of the only mountain in the plain north of the Great Lake, and it can thus be seen as consecrating yet another shift of the ritual power centre in South-east Asia: after Funan and the Śailendras it was now again the king of Cambodia who claimed to be, and soon would be in fact, the 'Universal Ruler.' This was the beginning not only of the kingdom of Angkor, which was to be the dominating power in the Indo-Chinese Peninsula for about half a millennium, but also of a new religion for which there was no precedent and which remained, with short interruptions, the



typically Khmer state religion and the basis for most of Cambodia's artistic achievements until well into the thirteenth century—the cult of the Deva-Rāja, or God-King.

The essence of this cult was that the king was believed to be the incarnation of the Hindu god of his choice (Śiva, Vishnu, etc.). He could communicate with the gods through the mediation of his court brahman and, by performing appropriate rituals in the centre of his temple-mountain, which was also seen as the centre of the universe, he brought this microcosm into harmony with the surrounding macrocosm. Thus he ensured the well-being of his country and everything in it. The implications for the development of Khmer art and civilization generally are obvious. Only very few of the Khmer kings had natural mountains or hills at their disposal on which to build their temples. In most cases artificial temple-mountains had to be resorted to. Moreover, as the king was buried in his temple-mountain, it thus became his mausoleum and could not again be ritually used. Hence each king had to build his own new temple. This resulted in a tremendous agglomeration of temples in a relatively small area; there are more than 250 in the central area of Angkor alone, and about 1200 in the whole of Cambodia. The king, being considered a god, centralized power to such an extent that he could command thousands of workmen, slaves and artists to work on immense communal projects such as temples, artificial lakes, irrigation canals and the like (the purpose of which might escape the individual labourer) without even the possibility of being disobeyed; a divine order simply has to be executed blindly.

The choice of the region just north of the western tip of the Great Lake as the site for the capital of what was to become the greatest empire

Angkor Vat from the air. Built by Suryavarman II between 1113 and c. 1150 A.D., Angkor Vat is the most perfect expression of the "temple-mountain" concept, and one of the most perfect architectural complexes in the world.







Entrance to Banteay Srei Temple, just north of Angkor (967 A.D.). Banteay Srei temple, being built by the brahmin Yajnavaraha instead of by a king, was not conceived as a 'temple-mountain', but erected on flat ground. The structure shows that it was thought out in wood and 'translated' into stone.

of early South-east Asian history was not fortuitous. This plain is not naturally a very fertile one (only two to three per cent of the present Cambodian rice crop comes from Siem Reap province, which includes the Angkor area) but, being traversed by rivers carrying water all the year round, there was the possibility of irrigation, which did not escape the attention of the first Khmer kings. Peculiar and unique hydrographic factors make the Great Lake swell to seven times its normal size in the rainy season, during which time an enormous number of fish grow in its nutrient-laden waters. It is, in proportion to its area, the world's richest



fishing ground. Even to this day it provides for the needs of six million fish-eating Cambodians, leaving a substantial amount for export. It must have been nearly the only source of proteins for the population of Angkor and some of its dependencies, to which dried fish were exported. The Great Lake, moreover, through the Tonlé Sap River and the Mekong provides access to the sea, while permitting the capital to be in a protected and fairly central position in relation to the vast territories dominated by it.

From the ninth century on, each king of Angkor, by building his own temple complete with moats, water reservoirs, distribution channels and so on, added to the increasingly elaborate irrigation system started by the founders. Their policies were based without doubt on the experience of Funan, where irrigation also played an indispensable rôle in the economy. The development of irrigation enabled the soil to produce more and more rice—several crops per year at the time of Angkor Vat—and thus laid firm economic foundations for Khmer expansion. Unlike Funan, which was mainly a sea-power deriving its wealth and importance from trade and the control of the Gulf of Siam and large parts of the South China Sea, the Angkorian state was essentially a land-power, turning its back on the sea but eventually controlling the larger part of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula. There is little evidence of maritime trade with the outside world in Angkor but, once set on its course, and without any further stimulus from other civilizations, the Khmer genius produced an ensemble of architecture, reliefs and sculptures which has no equal. Ordered by the God-King, directed by what must have been truly inspired and visionary—though anonymous—artists and organizers, fed on dried fish and rice, toiling from dawn to dusk, the Khmers created one of the world's great civilizations.

This is not the place to enumerate kings and monuments, battles and victories in their chronological sequence, but some of them nevertheless deserve special mention. In the eleventh century Khmer domination was extended over the Môn in the Menam Valley, in present central Thailand. The north-eastern part of present Thailand, i.e., the Khorat Plateau, and most of present Laos, had become Khmer already. This expansion took place under King Sūryavarman (Protected by the Sun) I, who is important in Khmer cultural history also for the fact that, himself a Hindu God-King, he was sufficiently sympathetic towards Buddhism to be given the posthumous name *Nirvānapada*, i.e., 'who entered Nirvāna'. With its domination extended over the Menam Valley, the Khmer empire now for the first time included a significant Buddhist population.

The middle of the eleventh century was generally a time of upheavals for western South-east Asia. In Burma it corresponds to the reign of Anōratha, who conquered large Môn-populated regions. In fact this time marks the end of the Môn kingdoms as important political units altogether, although the cultural importance of the Môn continued for a long time thereafter. In the eleventh century also reigned one of the greatest figures



in Javanese history, Airlangga, and during this same time an outside power, the Cholas from south India, intervened and greatly affected historical development in the area, as did the Normans at the same time elsewhere.

The fifth successor of Sūryavarman I, Sūryavarman II, who reigned during the first half of the twelfth century, deserves very special mention, as it was on his orders that what has been termed the greatest religious monument on earth was built—Angkor Vat.<sup>4</sup> Angkor Vat, with its five towers, its three floors, its walls and its moats, symbolizes, as did all the Angkorian temples before it, the cosmos according to the Indian cosmology, topped with Mount Meru, the abode of the gods. Built entirely without mortar and with enormous stone blocks transported over more than 25 miles (or 40 km) from Mount Kulen, it uses the most sophisticated architectural 'tricks', which only the ancient Greeks were supposed to have known, to achieve the maximum impression in the best possible perspective. Its more than two square kilometres (or three-quarters of a square mile) of bas-reliefs, mainly representing scenes from the Cambodian version of the Indian epics *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata*, are considered the zenith of Khmer art. They are also a mine of information about the contemporary scene in the Angkorian empire. In one panel, for instance, King Sūryavarman II is depicted reviewing his troops, amongst whom can be seen the first representations of *Syām*, i.e., Siamese or Thai warriors.

Under Sūryavarman II the Khmer empire extended still further on all sides, and now included everything from Champā to Burma and from northern Laos well into the Malay Peninsula, thus surpassing even the territorial possessions of Funan at its greatest extent. The cultural results of this Khmer expansion can easily be imagined. All art forms within the perimeter of Angkor's domination exhibit some degree of Khmer influence; Cambodian had long replaced Sanskrit as the prestige language at local courts, and the Khmer script—itsself developed out of an Indian prototype—is at the base of practically all scripts now used in the area. The Khmers, in fact, were the 'Indianizers' of the central part of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula.

The centre of this empire, Angkor itself, must have been a splendid town. Estimates, probably exaggerated, of its inhabitants go up to one million. In any case it was certainly the equal of the most splendid towns of contemporary Europe. It was then situated within an extensively cultivated, elaborately irrigated agricultural area of nearly a thousand square kilometres (or 380 square miles). Except for the temples, which were never inhabited and which were the only buildings in stone or, in the case of the earliest ones, brick, all dwellings—including the royal palaces—were

<sup>4</sup> *Angkor* is simply the Khmer rendering of Sanskrit *nagara*, i.e., town, which can also be found in the form of *Nokor* or, as in many Thai place names, as *Nakhon*, e.g., Nakhon Pathom, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Nakhon Ratchasima, etc.; *Vat* just means temple.

made of wood and other perishable materials, as is the custom in non-westernized South-east Asia to this day. The monuments which have survived are only the 'religious skeleton' of the town. But the building of temples continued, not only for the king himself but also for relatives and ancestors, using up much of the country's resources and manpower.

It was thus at the summit of its political power and artistic development that this empire experienced its most humiliating defeat. In 1177 a strong Cham force, sailing on large boats along the south-eastern coast of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula, up the Mekong and Tonlé Sap Rivers and through the Great Lake, took the capital Angkor by surprise, burnt and looted the town, killed the king and devastated the countryside.

However, only a few years later a Khmer prince, then already nearing 60, succeeded in raising an army and defeating the Cham occupation forces, after which, in 1181, he had himself crowned as Jayavarman ('Protected



Bas-relief from Angkor Vat showing the first pictorial representation of Thais.



by Victory') VII—the last great ruler of Angkor, and perhaps the greatest of them all. Under him once again Khmer power extended further than that of Funan, in fact the furthest ever, as he not only defeated the Chams but also annexed their country and made Champā a Khmer province. In a last outburst of energy, Angkor now reigned supreme over the entire mainland of South-east Asia, with the exception of Burma, North Vietnam, and the southern part of the Malay Peninsula.

This extraordinary figure, Jayavarman VII, distinguished himself from his predecessors by his truly astonishing drive. His building activity was such that he is said to have moved more stone than all his predecessors taken together. He was also distinguished by the fact that he was a Mahāyāna Buddhist. He continued the state religion of the God-King by simply substituting the Lokeśvara, the compassionate heavenly Buddha of whom he felt himself to be an incarnation on earth, for the Hindu god Śiva. Jayavarman VII was thus able to command the same total obedience of his people as the Hindu God-Kings before him, and he made the best use of this in a very short time. Knowing well that time was running short for him, he not only had his devastated country reconstructed, but also covered it with a network of roads, radiating from the capital to all provinces, with rest-houses and hospitals. Each of the latter carried an inscription which can be taken as this Buddhist king's credo: 'It is not his own suffering which is the suffering of the King, but his people's suffering'.

Jayavarman VII's own temple-mountain, the Bayon in the centre of Angkor Thom ('The Big Town') built at the turn of the century, is justly famous for its towers, which number over fifty and are carved with colossal faces of the king, four to each tower, one looking in each cardinal direction. These symbolize the king's omnipresence in the form of Lokeśvara (or *vice versa*). Also noteworthy are the lively, natural, and in some places even humorous bas-reliefs, markedly different from the somewhat stylized reliefs of Angkor Wat. In addition to the battle-scenes from the war of liberation against the Chams, these show what everyday life was like at that time in Cambodia. The Bayon is the last important monument built at Angkor.

#### COUNTRIES ON THE MARGIN: BURMA AND VIETNAM

While Angkorian Cambodia gradually absorbed nearly all mainland South-east Asia and determined this area's political and cultural development, two powers at the opposite ends of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula, too far away from the centre of the Khmer empire and too strong to be drawn into the latter's orbit, also grew steadily and developed their own civilizations. These were the predecessors of the present Burma and Vietnam.



To call the history of the constituent geographical parts of present Burma the 'History of Burma' is not only misleading but utterly wrong. Rather it is the history of an area in which several peoples, such as the Mōns, the Pyus, the Shans (Thais), the Burmans, and the Karens, interacted and fought for supremacy for many centuries. As the Burmans eventually got the upper hand, the area is now called Burma; but this was a fairly recent development.

Although it is the part of South-east Asia adjacent to India, the first reliable signs of the existence of Indian-inspired kingdoms or cultures in the area of present Burma are from a much later date than anywhere else in South-east Asia, except for easternmost Indonesia and the Philippines where such kingdoms never seem to have existed at all. This paradox can be explained by the fact that rugged mountains separate the Irrawaddy Valley from north-eastern India. These, though by no means insurmountable, were probably then as now populated by headhunting tribes, and for a long time constituted a deterring natural barrier to an advance overland. Most of the Indian influence to have reached South-east Asia appears to have originated in the south of India and would thus have come by sea. But in archaeology negative evidence is no evidence at all, and hence this absence of evidence of early Indian influence in the upper Irrawaddy Valley need not be taken as proof of the absence of this influence itself, especially as much of the area is still little explored archaeologically and new finds, changing the situation entirely, may be made at any moment.

The lower reaches of the Irrawaddy can be easily penetrated from the sea, which presumably then went further inland than it does today. Here was a small Indianized kingdom called *P'iao* by the Chinese, who were in contact with it *via* Yünnan, where communications with the Irrawaddy Valley are comparatively easy since the mountain chains are oriented from north to south. This kingdom was already in existence in the third century. Little is otherwise known about it. Its name is the Chinese rendering of the ethnic name *Pyu*, and the Pyus must have been Buddhists. Their kingdom was centred around the present town of Prome, although the Pyus are later also mentioned as living further north. They themselves have vanished as a people, and the last inscription in their language dates from the twelfth century. They seem to have been racially similar to the Burmans and appear to have been the precursors of the latter in their movement southwards from eastern Tibet. The same kingdom is called *Śrīkshetra* by Chinese pilgrims in the seventh century, and the existence of Theravāda Buddhism there is attested.

The Mōns were, if not the first inhabitants of the area, at least in all likelihood earlier ones than the Pyus. We have already met the former in connection with the kingdom of *Dvāravatī* in the Menam Plain. They seem to have occupied the Irrawaddy Basin including the deltaic region, the lower Sittang Valley, and the northern part of the Tenasserim coast



from time immemorial. Exposed to Indian and Ceylonese influence coming by sea ever since this influence was exerted, the Mônns had become the depositories and propagators of Buddhism and in particular its Ceylonese variety. It was from the ancient Môn countries in the lower Irrawaddy, Sittang, and Menam Valleys that Theravāda Buddhism spread throughout mainland South-east Asia to become the religion of the overwhelming majority of the population.

About the Burmans themselves, the first reliable information dates only from the end of the seventh century, when the kingdom of Nan-chao was founded in south-western China. This state was long regarded as the first Thai political unit, but it has recently been proved that it contained a mixed population of Thais and Burmans with a preponderance of the latter.

During the eighth century Nan-chao expanded into the upper valley of the Irrawaddy. Thus the Burmans came in contact with an Indianized population, the Mônns, and through them received a certain measure of Indian cultural influence. The first Burman centre within the boundaries of present Burma developed in the rice-growing plain at the confluence of the Chindwin and the Irrawaddy, an area which remained the Burman political and cultural centre until late in the nineteenth century, when it was shifted under the British to Rangoon, in the south. For two peoples to be of similar racial stock does not mean that one cannot make war against the other; Nan-chao subdued Śrīkshetra in 832, and the Pyus were gradually absorbed by their cousins the Burmans. In the meantime, however, Nan-chao had become a Chinese vassal, so that a little Chinese influence also reached the Irrawaddy Valley.

The elimination of the Pyus led to a political and cultural polarization in the Irrawaddy Valley. The Burmans, who were only superficially Indianized, dominated the land-locked northern part of the land, with their capital at Pagan, where a particular Mahāyāna Buddhist sect, that of the *Aris*, developed, and where the worship of *Nat* spirits was prominent, as it is to this day throughout Burma. The staunchly Theravāda Buddhist Mônns ruled the southern part, where their Indianized kingdom of Pegu grew steadily in importance, thanks to its favourable geographical situation as a trade centre.

Continuously recorded history in the area only commences in the eleventh century, with the unifier of these two poles, the Burman king, Anōratha (Aniruddha) of Pagan. A Buddhist himself, he conquered the Môn country, defeated the *Aris*, spread Theravāda Buddhism amongst his Burman subjects, and generally transformed an isolated backward state bottled up in the northern Burmese lowlands into a multiracial, ordered kingdom, with access to the sea, to trade and outside influences, and with a developing culture of its own. Thousands of Môn artists, scholars and experts were forcibly resettled in the Burman capital, Pagan. It was only



through this massive and intimate contact with the superior Indian-inspired Môn civilization that a distinct Burmese civilization now started to grow, based on Môn art, architecture, literature, and script, but developing according to the particular Burman genius.

Although he was obviously much concerned with religion, and started to cover the plain of Pagan with temples which eventually 'rivalled the stone forest of Angkor'<sup>5</sup>, Anôratha also took care to give his kingdom a solid economic basis by vastly improving the irrigation system in the lowlands near his capital, thus transforming them into the rice-bowl of his country. Only under the British did the Irrawaddy delta become the rich rice-growing area that it now is. Anôratha's was thus a strong and well organized Buddhist kingdom, reaching from Bhamo to the delta of the Irrawaddy. It even included Arakan, which had already come strongly under Indian influence, and parts of the Tenasserim coast. Anôratha died in 1077 and Burmese civilization, in the course of its formation, received new impulses from Ceylon after the Buddhist reformation there towards the end of the twelfth century. From the middle of the eleventh to the second half of the thirteenth century, the Burmans dominated most of what is now Burma.

Vietnam, more accurately *Nam Việt* (*Nan Yüe* in Chinese, meaning the Southern Viet or Yüe tribes) came under Han Chinese domination at the same time as most of North Africa came under that of the Romans. It included nearly all of present North Vietnam, and also the two adjacent Kwang provinces of south-eastern China, Kwang Si and Kwang Tung, and its capital was near present Canton. While the more northern Viet tribes had already been absorbed by the Chinese, these Southern Viet still retained their ethnic identity. Soon, however, under the Chinese occupation, all the Viet peoples north of the Red River delta were totally sinicized and assimilated, and only the southernmost group of the Southern Viet (the direct ancestors of the present Vietnamese) living in the province then called Giao Chi by the Chinese, remained ethnically and culturally distinct from their occupiers. The Chinese tried hard to bring about an assimilation in Giao Chi also, by administering the province directly through Chinese officials, by settling a number of Chinese colonists there, and even by forcing the local population to adopt certain Chinese customs, rites, and articles of clothing. They also introduced technological improvements in agriculture and the crafts, and Chinese became the official language. But the Vietnamese, although accepting some elements of Chinese civilization, never actually acquiesced to Chinese rule, and there were constant uprisings against the Chinese during their occupation, which lasted more than a thousand years. The Vietnamese tenaciously clung to their own habits and usages and, most surprising of all, to their language.

<sup>5</sup> Their number is said to have reached 5 000 at the time of the Mongol invasion at the end of the thirteenth century.



In much of western Europe at the same time the language of the occupying power, Latin, was quickly adopted by everybody, later becoming French, Spanish, etc., and the indigenous Celtic languages were almost entirely eliminated. The survival of the Vietnamese language, in spite of a much longer Chinese occupation than the Roman one of Spain and Gaul, seems almost a miracle. The present 'traditional' Vietnamese dress, so different from the Chinese one, the still widespread habits of betel chewing, teeth blackening, tattooing, and so on, not to mention folk beliefs and rituals, are also proofs of a very strong sense of their distinct identity amongst the Vietnamese. This identity was kept alive not only over a millennium of direct Chinese rule but also over a subsequent one of further Chinese influence and, at times, pressure.

During the period of Chinese occupation, at least from the third century onwards, Giao Chi became a centre of Buddhist learning because it was a convenient halting place for pilgrims and missionaries on their way from India to China or *vice versa*. When on one occasion an eager Chinese emperor, bent on converting the heathen Viets, intended to send Buddhist missionaries there, he was told that this was hardly necessary, as Giao Chi was far more Buddhist than China herself. Mahāyāna Buddhism, and in particular the Thien or Zen sect, although of course not of Vietnamese origin, has ever since been considered almost the national religion, a rôle which Confucianism could never assume, being too visibly connected with a foreign power, although it remained the official philosophy of the government even of independent Vietnam. The same is true of Catholicism in later times. Whenever the waves of nationalist feeling ran high, as in the centuries after the gaining of independence from the Chinese, or during the sixteenth century, or in fact only some years ago, there was an upsurge of Buddhism. Otherwise Buddhism exists for the masses only as part of a mixed religion which includes also Taoism, Confucianism, ancestor worship and animistic beliefs, and which comes much nearer to being the 'national religion' of the Vietnamese than Buddhism alone.

The gaining of independence from China in 939 was the result not of a particular development which had finally come to fruition, but rather of a political situation favourable to the Vietnamese. The uprising which led to it and which was not very different from all the others preceeding it started with the aim of simply replacing the unpopular Chinese governor of Giao Chi by a local one. But China was then, in the Five Dynasties period, in such a turmoil that she was unable to massively intervene, as she would normally have done. Therefore the incident developed into a limited struggle between the Vietnamese and the South Chinese state (Nam Han). The former were victorious and thus they established their independence. The final battle against the Chinese navy was won by the clever and courageous Vietnamese under the leadership of Ngô Quyền by filling



the Red River estuary with iron-tipped stakes on which the Chinese war junks were impaled. This battle is remembered in Vietnam to this day as the victory of a David over a Goliath, though the Goliath was not in his best form at the time. When, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, the Chinese tried once again to subdue Vietnam and to make it a Chinese province, it was far too late, for Vietnam had become strong enough to resist the Chinese, who were utterly defeated.

The first century or so of independence was not an easy time for Vietnam. Three 'dynasties', consisting of just one king each, the Ngô (Ngô Quyền became the first independent king) Dinh, and earlier Lê dynasties, followed each other in rapid succession as results of *coups d'état* and none of them brought about stability, material wealth, or political importance. This was the work of the first truly national dynasties, the Ly (1010-1225) and the Tran (to 1400). Under them Vietnam (then called Dai Viet, the Great Viet) became a strong, well organized and respected country, capable even of repelling attempted Mongol invasions at the end of the thirteenth century.

As often happens with liberated peoples, the former colonial master is looked upon with increasing sympathy in proportion to the time that has passed since independence. What the Chinese were unable to create in Vietnam in a millennium of occupation became a reality in a matter of a mere couple of centuries. This was the formation of a sinicized Vietnamese civilization. Buddhism was much in favour after independence but, as this religion is, on the whole, more concerned with the salvation of the individual than with the organization of society and does not provide detailed rules of conduct for the running of a state, the government was compelled to fall back for its political philosophy on the Confucianism that it had been used to from the Chinese period. This in turn meant the introduction of Chinese-style education, examinations, and officialdom. Since the Vietnamese had their own language but not their own script, it also meant the continued use of Chinese characters and language for official purposes, including literature.

Thus by the force of circumstances the framework of Vietnamese civilization became very Chinese, although its content has always been distinctly Vietnamese. Nowhere is this more visible than in the Vietnamese countryside, where Chinese influence made little or no impact and where the peasant still lives in a world where his non-Chinese past is more or less intact.

#### NEW NATIONS

Throughout mainland South-east Asia, the thirteenth century marks the end of the political predominance of the Indianized kingdoms which, from the first centuries A.D., had ruled supreme over the Indo-Chinese



Peninsula, with the exception of the Red River delta in its far north-east. The Funanese, whoever they were, Môn, Khmers, and Chams had been the masters of the Peninsula for a longer time than that which separates Queen Elizabeth II from King Alfred. Inspired by the Indian concept of kingship, the great Indian epics, Indian cosmology, and the Indian pantheon, they developed high civilizations second to none in the world but substantially different not only from that of the spiritual mother country but also from each other, and they held under their sway numerous other peoples about whom we know little or nothing at all. These ruling peoples had something in common, in spite of their linguistic and cultural differences and in spite of the fact that they constantly fought against each other—they were all members of the same ethnic family, that of the earlier inhabitants of South-east Asia, presumably of Nesiote stock.

The new epoch, which started about the end of the thirteenth century, was ushered in by the Mongols who, however, soon left South-east Asia again. In their wake came several new peoples from the north who gradually took over the control of the peninsula from its previous masters. Thais, Vietnamese, and Burmans, despite the many wars they constantly fought one against the other, and notwithstanding many differences in various fields, also have something in common—they are of a markedly more Mongoloid stock than their predecessors on the peninsula.

Although culturally they took over much from their predecessors, these new peoples, in only a few centuries, defeated the former rulers of the peninsula, divided their lands amongst themselves, and all but absorbed and eliminated them ethnically. Môn and Chams now only exist as insignificant ethnic minorities in the areas they formerly dominated, and the survival of the Khmers as a national entity is only due to the intervention of the French in the nineteenth century, which saved them from sharing the fate of their Môn and Cham brethren.

Direct or indirect impulses from India, which had from time to time invigorated these already Indianized civilizations, now ceased. With few exceptions the many inscriptions in stone in both Sanskrit and the vernaculars also ceased. References to the area in Chinese sources become more sparse. From that time on practically the only historical sources are the local chronicles which, several times destroyed by incessant wars and finally edited only in the nineteenth century, are not very reliable for the period immediately following the end of the first epoch. From the sixteenth century on the chronicles are corroborated by European records, and from the nineteenth century on these are almost the only historical sources.

The civilizations of the Vietnamese and the Burmans were more or less formed in the thirteenth century, and that of the Thais established the direction of its further development about a century later. These are the 'traditional' mainland South-east Asian civilizations which later felt the impact of the West but which are nevertheless still very much alive.



For more than a millennium China was the ultimate overlord and arbiter in political matters, and was accepted as such by all South-east Asian states, even though they derived their civilizations mainly from India. China's rôle was on the whole limited to the sending and receiving of missions, the granting of titles and investitures. Except in Vietnam, there was no Chinese occupation or interference in the internal affairs of the South-east Asian kingdoms. With the coming to power of the Mongols in China, this lenient attitude towards their vassals changed, and during the second half of the thirteenth century, at the time when the last crusades were taking place in the West, the Mongols tried to assert their suzerainty throughout the Indo-Chinese Peninsula (as also in Japan, Korea, and other parts of Asia) by attempting to occupy as much of it as possible. The Mongols were excellent warriors on horseback in open steppe country, but they were not accustomed to South-east Asian climatic and geographical conditions. They complained at once about 'excessive heat and dampness' and were quite out of place in the jungle-covered mountains. Hence they were not very successful in this venture, but they succeeded in creating turmoil wherever they went and in effectively influencing the historical development of the area.

No other South-east Asian country suffered more from the Mongols than the Burman kingdom of Pagan. Following the annexation of Yünnan by Khubilai Khan, Mongol armies invaded and temporarily occupied all northern Burma. They defeated the Burman forces at the memorable Battle of Vochan, where 'Tatar archers made pincushions of Pagan's vaunted war elephants'. They conquered Pagan itself in 1287, and thus put an end to the kingdom of the same name. This, however, was not the only result of the Mongol campaign. Another was of a psychological nature. For the Burmans it was the first defeat in their history, for which they found an excuse by later asserting that the Mongols had attacked with 26 million men. It shattered their belief in their invincibility and created a special attitude towards China which shows its effect to this day. But the most important result, which also still has its repercussions and which affected practically the entire peninsula, was that it opened the door to the Thais.

When exactly Thai peoples started to infiltrate into South-east Asia is still a matter of conjecture. The eighth-century Nan Chao state in Yünnan comprised a large proportion of Thai subjects, and Thais served in the army of Sūryavarman II of Angkor. In any case, by the beginning of the thirteenth century Thais must have been numerous enough in present northern Thailand to be able to challenge Khmer suzerainty and declare themselves independent. This event took place at Sukhothai, then the Khmer provincial capital, where Khmer ruins can still be seen, and it marks the beginning of the first Thai state in South-east Asia proper. This area was far away from Angkor, which was then too weak to restore its power.





Buddha figure, Sukhothai (early 14th century). Sukhothai was the first Thai political and cultural centre. The columns seen in this photograph formerly supported a roof, and were covered with stucco.

Other small Thai principalities had come into being in the northernmost part of present Thailand, and in 1287, the year of the fall of the Pagan kingdom, the chiefs of two of them and the king of Sukhothai, Rāma Khamhaeng, concluded a solemn pact of friendship. Soon, however, Rāma Khamhaeng emerged as the strongest personality. He incorporated in his growing kingdom much of the area of the north with a Thai majority in its population, and also practically the entire Menam Valley and adjacent areas down to present-day Bangkok, which must then have had a mixed population of Mōns, Khmers, and Thais. He even gained control of the northern part of the Malay Peninsula, where the Thais were also probably still in a minority.

Thus in a few decades the political situation in the central part of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula was completely altered. From the domination of the Khmers it passed to that of the Thais, without this change in the ruling class being accompanied by a significant change in the ethnic composition of the population as a whole. Such a change was, however, taking place, but only gradually, in favour of the Thais and mainly at the expense of the Mōns. The last Mōn kingdom, that of Haripunjaya, centred



around the present town of Lampun in northern Thailand, was conquered by the Thais only in the last years of the thirteenth century.

Other Thai tribes had infiltrated, presumably long before, into the mountain areas of present day North Vietnam. Probably because of the rugged terrain, which prevented easy communication and thus the formation of large political units, they were never able to achieve statehood. In what is now called Laos, however, where the Thais continued to advance to the south along the Mekong lowlands, the Thai state of Lan Chang ('Country of the Million Elephants') was born in the middle of the fourteenth century in territory formerly ruled by the Khmers. In the valley of the Irrawaddy, the fall of Burman Pagan at the hands of the Mongols resulted in the establishment of Thai rule. The Thais, who are here called Shans (a word of the same derivation as *Syām* or *Siam*) gained control not only of the former Pagan and the north, which must have included a large Burman population, but also of the Môn-populated delta, of which the Thai chief, Wareru, became ruler. He had links with the king of neighbouring Sukhothai. Those Burmans who wanted to escape Thai domination concentrated in the fortified town of Taunggu, which thus became the capital of a small Burman kingdom of the same name, and for a while it looked as if what is now Burma would become another 'Thailand'.

The Thais originated in Yünnan, in southern China, but they had never been strongly sinicized. They began to spread to the south-east, south, and south-west sometime towards the end of the first millennium A.D. In the south-east they could not advance far into the Red River plain because it was solidly occupied by the Vietnamese, but eventually they reached the plains of the middle Mekong. In the south-west, the defeat of the Burmans, who had long opposed their advance into the lowlands, gave the Thais access to the Irrawaddy Plain. But they made their farthest advance towards the south along the line of least resistance, the Menam Plain, and into the Malay Peninsula. Not unlike the Germanic peoples who at about the same time had achieved political predominance in much of continental Europe after a long period of ethnic expansion, the Thais, originally a landlocked people in southern China, had become by the fourteenth century one of the farthest drawn-out ethnic groups in the whole of Asia, nearly equalling in their north to south extension that of the Chinese themselves, reaching the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea.

Extremely dynamic, organized initially in small principalities along feudal lines, skilled in agriculture, warfare, and many crafts, the Thais now formed their own high civilizations in contact with the lowland peoples of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula. In Burma they adopted Theravāda Buddhism from the Burmans, as well as several cultural traits which were originally Môn. But Thai rule in the Irrawaddy Valley only lasted for about two and a half centuries. The second king of the Burman dynasty established at Taunggu, Tabinshwehti, was able to stage a Burman come-back by conquering both the delta and the north.



Thus in the middle of the sixteenth century the whole of Burma was again unified. The Thais never had numerical superiority there, and hence a lasting brand of Burman-inspired Thai civilization did not develop. Only their Theravāda Buddhism is left to remind the present-day Shans, again confined to the mountainous eastern part of Burma (the Shan States) that once they nearly made the entire country a Thai kingdom.

In Laos, the foundation of Lan Chang was laid with Khmer help in 1353 by a Thai prince who had been educated in Angkor and married a Khmer princess. Here Khmer artists, experts, and military and civilian advisers worked together for a long time after the foundation of the kingdom, and a particular variety of Thai civilization developed which included many Khmer cultural elements. But the most significant and characteristic Thai cultural development took place in what is now Thailand proper, and in particular in its northern and central part, the Menam Plain. In this strongly Theravāda Buddhist region, the Thais adopted this form of Buddhism immediately and made it the basis of their own civilization, thus emphasizing their difference from the former Khmer rulers of the area, who had again become Hindus after the death of Jayavarman VII. The great Thai king, Rāma Khamhaeng, consolidated the political indepen-

*Stūpas in Ayuthia in the ruined state in which they were left by the Burmese conquest and subsequent abandonment of the city in the late 18th century.*



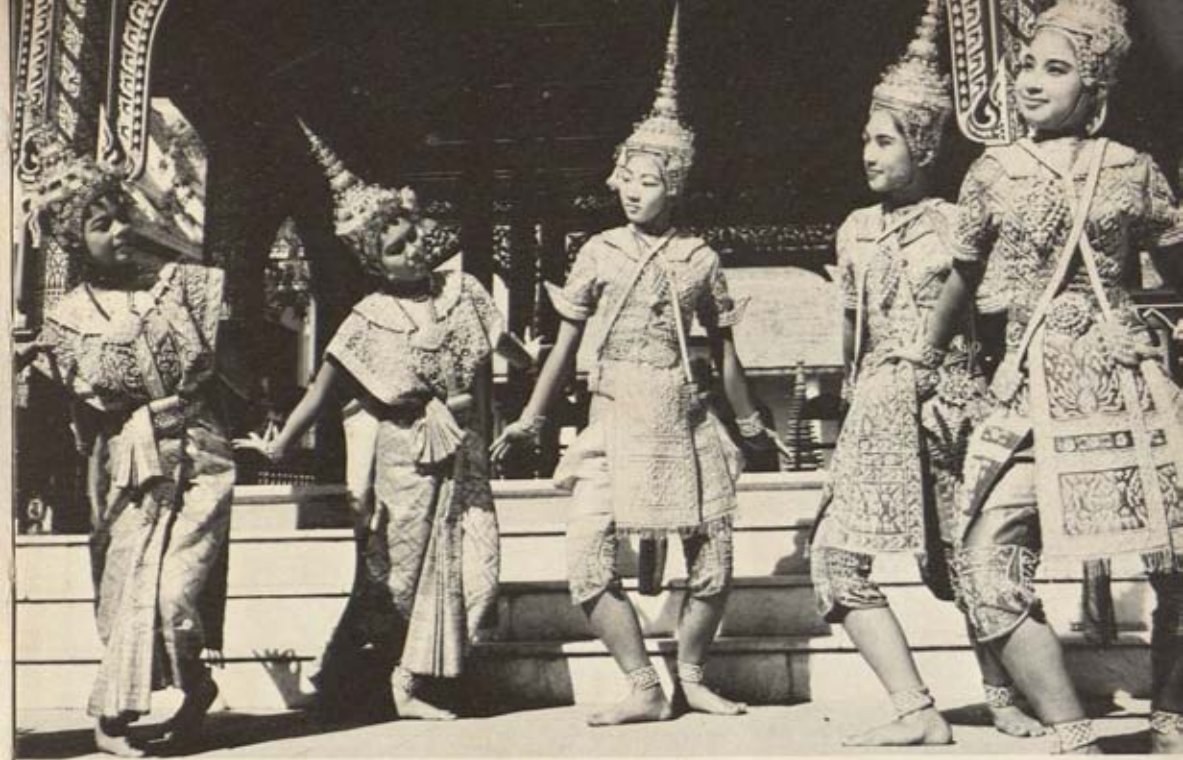


dence of Sukhothai and, as we have seen, enlarged this Thai kingdom considerably in a very short time. He and his immediate successors took care not to copy anything from their former masters. As if wanting to assert their cultural as well as their political independence, these Thai kings chose Indian, Ceylonese, or Môn—but not Khmer—models for their buildings and sculptures, and also created entirely new art styles altogether. The walking Buddha figure, for instance, which has remained prominent in Thai art ever since Sukhothai times, has no precedent. There were at that time simply no Khmer models for Theravāda Buddhist art forms, as this school of Buddhism was only then slowly beginning to gain ground in Cambodia. Thai art, on the contrary, later inspired many an artistic development in Buddhist Cambodia. Under Rāma Khamhaeng, Chinese potters were also called into the country, under whose guidance was begun the production of the celadon-style glazed pottery ware of the Sawankhalok and Sukhothai kilns. For several centuries these were among the main export articles of Thailand to other South-east Asian countries, even including the Philippines.

In 1350 the centre of Thai political power in the Menam Basin shifted further to the south, to Ayuthia, which thus became the successor state of Sukhothai. Ayuthia remained the capital of this Thai kingdom until its destruction by the Burmese in 1767, after which it was established still further south at present Bangkok. Here the cultural situation also changed considerably. The newly independent Sukhothai had been situated on the fringes of the Khmer zone of influence and had been aware of the possibility of Khmer reprisals. Ayuthia was in an area which had experienced more intense Khmer influence, but by now there was no reason to fear the much weakened Angkor, which was itself threatened by the Thais. Amongst other considerations, it was the fact that the Thai capital was only about 230 miles (or 360 km) from Angkor, with no natural obstacles in between, that caused the Khmers less than a century later to shift their capital further to the south-east, to a less exposed position in the present Phnom-Penh area.

Thus there was no further need for the Thais of Ayuthia to assert their independence, either politically or culturally. Rather they considered themselves now the inheritors of Angkor, ruling over much of the former Angkorian empire and having become the most powerful state of the peninsula. Had the title of 'King of the Mountain' not become irrelevant long ago through the introduction of Theravāda Buddhism, the king of Ayuthia would probably have claimed it. Far from wanting to avoid Khmer influence, the Thais now consciously adopted several Khmer cultural elements, particularly in their architecture. The Khmer ogival tower typical of Angkor Vat and other monuments now tops Thai Buddhist *stūpas* and royal palaces. They also adapted some of the ideas of divine kingship to Theravāda Buddhism and even introduced Khmer ceremonials and words





Dance performance by members of the Fine Arts Department Classical Ballet, Bangkok.

at the court of Ayuthia. As the Môn artistic tradition, still strong in this area, also left an impression on the art of Ayuthia, Thai civilization of the Menam Plain now contains Indian, Ceylonese, Khmer, and Môn cultural traits. These are now fused, with those the Thais brought into the area from southern China and those they created themselves in their present habitat, into a homogeneous entity, typical of the Thais and of nobody else.

The other major new emerging force of mainland South-east Asia, the Vietnamese, are at present the most numerous nation in the area, and after the Indonesians the second most numerous in all South-east Asia. They started to expand southwards in earnest after the defeat of the Ming Chinese in 1427 by Lê Loi. He has been called the greatest hero in Vietnamese history, ushering in the 'Golden Age' of Vietnamese civilization as first king of the (Later) Lê dynasty, which in theory ruled until the end of the eighteenth century. Until then Dai' Viet had put pressure on its southern neighbour, Champā, which had again become independent of Angkor in 1220. The Vietnamese had previously taken the three northernmost Cham provinces and had forced the Chams to transfer their capital to a more southern location. But now, their forces restored after the Chinese interlude, during which the Chams had reclaimed their lost provinces, the Vietnamese decided to finish with their troublesome neighbour once and forever, and in 1471 they invaded, defeated, and occupied the whole of



Champā as far as Cape Varella. The remaining few southernmost Cham provinces became vassal states of Vietnam. Later these were also annexed, and Champā vanished from the map.

The Chinese had tried to eradicate Vietnamese cultural identity not only during their first rule until the tenth century but also during the twenty years of their renewed occupation at the beginning of the fifteenth century, when they even forbade practices they considered most typically Vietnamese, such as betel-chewing, teeth-blackening, and tattooing. Now the Vietnamese tried to eradicate the cultural identity of the Chams. But although on the whole more successful in this than the Chinese, the Vietnamese, in the process of absorbing and assimilating the Chams, took over several elements of the civilization of their victims, notably in music, dance, dress, and sculpture. Also a fair amount of intermarrying must have taken place from this time on, and hence both the civilization and the ethnic type in South Vietnam show some differences from those of the north. This tendency became still more pronounced during the following centuries, when the Vietnamese expanded further into Khmer territory. Although this southern Vietnamese civilization cannot, of course, be called 'Indianized', it contains far more Indian-derived traits than is commonly assumed.

The question has been asked how it could happen that such a strong, courageous, and warlike people as the Chams, constantly referred to as terrible pirates and fierce fighters by Chinese and Vietnamese alike, could be overrun comparatively easily in just a few years? The answer probably lies in the geographical configuration of their country, which not only divided the Chams into small units amongst which communication was difficult but also failed to provide them with an adequate economic background for prolonged warfare. The constantly growing Vietnamese population must have, after all, been the main reason for the Vietnamese *nam tiến*, or march to the south. While the Vietnamese could always draw on their seemingly inexhaustible reservoir of manpower and food in the fertile Red River delta, the small coastal plains of Champā were not sufficient to feed an economically unproductive army for a long time—for quick raids and piratical operations they were enough, but not for an all-out war.

#### ENEMY BROTHERS: MAINLAND SOUTH-EAST ASIAN HISTORY UNTIL COLONIAL TIMES

The history of mainland South-east Asia from the fourteenth century to the first massive European intervention in the area is characterized by incessant fighting not only between the emerging forces and the declining powers, but also among the emerging forces themselves.

To take the declining countries first: the Chams were virtually eliminated as a political power, as were the Môngs in the Menam Plain. In





Entrance to Ta Som Temple, Angkor. The Ta Som temple, built by Jayavarman VII at the end of the 12th and beginning of the 13th century, has been purposely left in the state in which it was rediscovered.

the lower Irrawaddy Plain, the Mōns quickly reasserted their independence after Tabinshwehti's death, but were just as quickly subdued again by his brother-in-law and successor Bayinnaung in 1554. From then on until the middle of the eighteenth century, the former kingdom of Pegu remained under Burman overlordship. In 1752 the Mōns were not only independent again but even took the Burman capital, Ava, on the northern reaches of the Irrawaddy, thus showing their undiminished vigour in spite of prolonged Burman rule. However, once again, for the third time in the history of the area, a strong Burman ruler emerged, Alaungpaya, who chased the Mōns from northern Burma, conquered Pegu in 1757, and re-unified the entire Irrawaddy Valley under Burman domination. He took and destroyed the Thai capital Ayuthia ten years later.

Angkor declined rapidly after the death of Jayavarman VII. This is not to be taken as a degeneration but simply as a gradual loss of political importance. In fact, the report of a Chinese envoy at the end of the

thirteenth century shows that Angkor was then still a splendid city. But instead of saying, as some have, that Cambodia was then a body without a head, it seems more appropriate to call Angkor a head without a body, or with an increasingly mutilated body. Champā had become independent again. In Laos Khmer influence was to be re-established only with the foundation of Lan Chang and not in the form of straightforward political domination. The Menam Valley and what was Khmer of the Malay Peninsula were conquered by the Thais. Only the south-easternmost part of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula, not much more than the present Cambodia, was now ruled by Angkor—a far cry from the Angkorian Empire of only a century earlier.

In 1431, after its conquest by Thai forces, Angkor was abandoned and a new capital was established in the region of the confluence of Tonlé Sap river and the Mekong—first at Phnom-Penh, then at Lovek or Udong and, with the French Protectorate, again at Phnom-Penh. This shift was obviously made for political reasons, as Angkor had by then become too exposed to the attacks from its powerful neighbour. But religious and economic reasons were just as decisive.

There has been much speculation on the 'mystery' of the abandonment of Angkor and the most fantastic theories have been put forward to explain it. In reality it seems that there is no mystery at all. The Angkorian Plain was made fertile and thus became the rice-bowl for a large population only through a complex irrigation system, built by countless workmen by order of God-Kings over several centuries. Once the God-Kings were 'pushed down from their altar' by Theravāda Buddhism, which was brought to Cambodia sometime during the thirteenth century and reached the court at the beginning of the fourteenth century, the maintenance of this irrigation network was no longer ensured. Thus the canals and reservoirs silted up and the soil gradually reverted to its former state, producing less and less rice. Without ever developing into a mass migration, the population of Angkor gradually drifted away to greener pastures in the naturally fertile plains of the lower Mekong to the south-east, where also the capital was established.

The memory of Angkor, though abandoned as a capital, was always present in the minds of Cambodians—witness several kings in the sixteenth century who either installed their court or their temporary residence there. The last king of an independent Cambodia before the French Protectorate, Ang Duong, chose the silhouette of Angkor Vat as the emblem of his state, which it still is. Rather than call it 'a spiritual catastrophe' for the Khmers, as has recently been done, the introduction of Theravāda Buddhism should thus be seen as having had unfortunate consequences only in the economic sector. Spiritually it probably brought relief to the Cambodian people exhausted from five centuries of incessant temple building—hence its quick acceptance.



From the fourteenth century onwards Theravāda Buddhism was thus part of Khmer civilization, the course of which it changed radically. As this religion has different artistic requirements from the previous Hinduism, the Deva-Rāja cult, or the Mahāyāna Buddhism of Jayavarman VII, nobody should expect the continuation of the temple-building activity as before, just as nobody would expect a people that has become Communist to continue to build cathedrals. And yet the fact that no further elaborate stone monuments were built by the Khmers has often been taken as a proof of their 'degeneration', and it has even been argued that the present Cambodians could not possibly be the descendants of the builders of Angkor. They are. Since Buddhist pagodas (i.e., the *Vat*) were traditionally until recently made of wood, as were also many of the early Buddha figures, post-Angkorian art and religious architecture are not very well known. Those few sculptures that are preserved from this period, however, show that the Khmers had lost nothing of their artistic skill.

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Cambodia had to defend herself constantly against her more powerful western neighbour, although at times—and particularly when Thailand was occupied in turn with fighting its own neighbour to the west, Burma—Cambodia even had the upper hand. In 1594, however, the capital Lovek was taken by Thai troops, and after this event there occurred an episode, lasting only a few years, which might have had the gravest political consequences for Cambodia—the intervention of a group of Portuguese and Spanish mercenaries, supported by the Philippines (Portugal was then incorporated with Spain) which brought Cambodia within a hair's breadth of also becoming a Spanish colony. Most of these Europeans were eventually killed, and today the only traces left by this episode are some Portuguese words in the Cambodian language, the Portuguese names of a few influential Cambodian families who constitute a small Catholic community, and certain odd details of Cambodian material culture.

In 1620 a Cambodian king married a Vietnamese princess and this led to the peaceful infiltration of many Vietnamese settlers into the then sparsely populated Mekong delta and, in 1623, a Vietnamese customs office was established at the village of Prei Kor—now better known by the name of Saigon. In the middle of the same century, another Cambodian king was converted to Islām and the Muslim community in Cambodia, formed mainly by refugees from Champā who had become Muslims at an unknown time, gained in importance. To this day, the Muslim Chams form an important minority in Cambodia, particularly in Kompong Cham (the Cham Town). This period also marks the end of Dutch attempts to establish trading posts in the country. The later kings were again Buddhists.

During the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century, Cambodia more and more became the bone of contention between the Thais and the Vietnamese, who both annexed large regions of its territory



and eventually, in 1845, established a veritable condominium over what was left of the country. The Cambodian king, Ang Duong, ancestor of the line of monarchs who ruled the kingdom until 1970, was crowned in 1847 by representatives of the courts of Bangkok and Hué. As Cambodia shares a common religion with Thailand (then known as Siam) a certain number of Thai cultural elements were adopted by Cambodia during this time of Thai ascendancy. These are visible particularly in architecture, dance, literature, and the religion itself, although some of these elements may have found their way into the Menam plain from Angkor several centuries earlier. The Vietnamese, too, left some traces on Khmer civilization and on the ethnic composition of the population, especially as a result of a campaign of assimilation in the eastern part of the country during the first half of the nineteenth century. Ultimately it was the establishment of the French Protectorate in 1863 which saved the remnant of the last of the old powers of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula from vanishing like all the others by being divided between its two powerful neighbours.

The history of the Peninsula is from now on one of uninterrupted warfare, in spite of strong common links, such as Theravāda Buddhism, between the Burmese and the Thais, and basic ethnic and cultural similarities between the Thais and the Vietnamese. Hardly a decade passed by in which there was not some fighting between Pagan and Ayuthia, Ayuthia and Chiangmai, Chiangmai and Pagan, Ayuthia and Lan Chang, Lan Chang and Dai Viet, and so on. If to some historians the history of Europe seems the ultimate in warfare, that of mainland South-east Asia at this time certainly surpasses it. Except for the transmission of a few cultural elements from Burma into Thailand and from Vietnam into Laos, this history of conflict did not, on the whole, greatly affect the development of the civilizations of the nations involved. Here, therefore, we give only its outline.

The history of the Irrawaddy Valley was from the eleventh century on essentially that of the relations between the established Môn and the newcomers Burmans. Eventually, after many ups and downs, this resulted in the absorption of the former by the latter who, however, adopted more or less entirely the civilization of their victims. After the Mongol conquest of Pagan a new element entered the picture—the Thais, who thus transformed the single two-polar power constellation into a triangular one, although culturally they played a more passive role.

With the political elimination of the Thais by the Burmans in the middle of the sixteenth century, the situation reverted to what it was before. But at the same time wars with powers outside the Irrawaddy Valley began. Tabinshwehti invaded Arakan while Ayuthia invaded Tavoy; this was followed by a Burmese raid on Ayuthia and in 1569 its capture by the Burman king, Bayinnaung ('the Burmese Napoleon'), who also reigned over Manipur to the west and Chiangmai to the east of the Irrawaddy



Valley. Fifteen years later, the Thais attacked Pegu and shortly afterwards the Burmans invaded Siam again, while Arakanese troops took Pegu. In 1635, after a time when Pegu was the seat of government, Ava became the capital, and just before the middle of the century Ming Chinese troops invaded northern Burma while Thais from Ayuthia pillaged the delta. The second quarter of the eighteenth century was filled with attacks by the newly independent Manipur, which in turn was taken by Alaungpaya in 1759 after his success over the Mōns and before an attack on Ayuthia. The latter was finally taken and totally destroyed in 1767. At the same time the Chinese again invaded Burma from the north and the Mōns revolted in several parts of the country. King Bodōpaya, who reigned during the last two decades of the eighteenth century and the first two of the nineteenth, suppressed these revolts, conquered Arakan and Assam, and waged war in Siam. Further wars with Assam and the invasion of areas under the jurisdiction of the East India Company by Bodōpaya's son and successor Bagyidō brought about the first Anglo-Burmese War.

In the Menam Valley, the situation after the establishment of the states of Sukhothai, and later of Ayuthia, was simpler inasmuch as there was no internal enemy who could stage uprisings and demand independence, as the Mōns did in the Irrawaddy Valley. Wars were only fought with powers outside the area, except for the northernmost part of it, Chiengmai, which changed hands several times between the Thais and the Burmans, and was also sometimes an independent state.

The two centuries following the foundation of Ayuthia were filled with fighting with the Khmers and resulted in the expansion of Thai power over what is now north-eastern Thailand, the Khorat Plateau. During the same period, wars with Chiengmai (the former kingdom of Lan Na) were also waged, and the port of Tavoy on the Tenasserim coast was occupied. The second half of the sixteenth century was a time of disastrous wars with the Burmans, who took Chiengmai in 1556 and kept Ayuthia as a vassal state for fifteen years, until the Thai prince, Naresuen, declared himself independent in 1584 and defeated the Burmans. Towards the end of the century, after Naresuen had become king, the Thais inflicted new defeats on the Burmans, dominated parts of Pegu, and conquered the Cambodian capital Lovek. At the beginning of the seventeenth century a campaign took place to help the Shans against the Burmans, which is interesting for the Thai solidarity it shows, although it was not very successful. In 1618 the Burmans exchanged Chiengmai for the port of Martaban, and Cambodia repudiated the suzerainty of Ayuthia which, however, was re-established without war a few years later under King Prasat T'ong. The latter also fought against Chiengmai, Portugal, and the Japanese of his royal guard, all of whom he had assassinated. Between the years 1662 and 1688 a similar episode to that in Cambodia at the end of the sixteenth century occurred in the Thai kingdom, during the reign of King Narai: the



Greek adventurer, Constantine Phaulkon, nearly succeeded in bringing it into the orbit of a European power, in this case France, whose missionaries had been well received there and whose traders and even troops installed themselves in Bangkok in 1687, their aim being to convert king and country to Catholicism. The death of King Narai caused the end of this attempt. Phaulkon was executed and the Europeans chased from the country. To this day the Western-style palace and houses built under Narai can be seen in Lopburi, which was his capital.

New campaigns against Cambodia at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and renewed wars with Burma during the second half of the same century, resulted in the destruction of Ayuthia and the end of this kingdom. The Thais, however, were able to expel the Burmans a few years later, and established their new capital first at Thonburi and then at Bangkok. Ayuthia was never rebuilt and is now in precisely the state the Burmans left it two hundred years ago. This starts a new period in Thai history, the Bangkok Period, and in 1782 a new dynasty, the Chakri Dynasty, so called after the personal name of its founder, Rāma I. This dynasty is still reigning in Thailand.

Further to the east, in the area which is now Laos, at present the only land-locked country in all South-east Asia, we have already mentioned the foundation of the Thai kingdom of Lan Chang with Khmer help, at the same time as Ayuthia was founded. The founder and first king of Lan Chang was Fa Ngum. For about two centuries he and his successors strengthened this kingdom and consolidated its independence. During this time its eastern neighbour Vietnam was rapidly expanding and promptly invaded Lan Chang after the conquest of Champā (1478-9). For some time around the middle of the sixteenth century, Chiengmai belonged to Lan Chang, and this led to a century of wars with Burma. From this time dates the best known Lao monument, the That Luang near Vieng Chan (Vientiane). Built in 1566 and symbolizing the cosmic mountain, it perpetuates Khmer influence, although it is a Theravāda Buddhist monument. In 1574 the Burmans succeeded in taking Vieng Chan and the kingdom became a Burman vassal state for a few years. Towards the end of the following century, Lan Chang was divided into two kingdoms, Vieng Chan and Luang Prabang. As Vieng Chan was allied with the Burmans against Ayuthia when this town was conquered in 1767, it was later annexed for four years by the newly liberated Thais, of whom it remained a vassal state until the Lan Chang invasion of Thailand in 1826, which led in turn to the Thai re-conquest and destruction of Vieng Chan two years later.

The kingdom of Luang Prabang was invaded by the Burmans in the middle of the eighteenth century and remained a vassal state of Burma until 1774, only to become one of Thailand two years later, when Vieng Chan was taken and annexed by the Thais. In 1864 bands of south



Chinese invaded the kingdom of Luang Prabang, and they did so again in 1872. This gave a pretext to the Thais to intervene, and by 1885 they had occupied large parts of the kingdom. This in turn aroused protests from Vietnam, already under the French Protectorate, which considered this area within her zone of influence, and resulted in French intervention.

Shortly after the annexation of Champā and the establishment of Vietnamese suzerainty over Lan Chang, Vietnam expanded along the east coast of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula even across the mountain chain which had hitherto limited it to the west, into the Mekong Plain. At this time a development started which eventually resulted in the partition of the country into two mutually hostile halves—the forerunner of the present situation. Internal struggles at the beginning of the sixteenth century led to the drastic weakening of the legitimate Lê emperors and the concentration of power in the hands of three, later two, important families. It began with the usurpation of the Mac in 1524, which was recognized by China three years later, with the result that until 1671 there was a small Mac-ruled state within the state in the Cao Bang region of North Vietnam.

More important were two other newly emerging families, the Trinh and the Nguyễn. The Trinh held sway over the northern part of Vietnam, claiming to act on behalf of the legitimate Lê emperors, who became mere puppets. The Nguyễn, who voluntarily had themselves sent to the south in 1558, considered the Trinh usurpers, and claimed to work towards the restoration of the legitimate emperors' authority. A deadly animosity arose between the two families. In 1620 this cold war developed into a hot one. European powers were also involved; while the Nguyễn enjoyed the support of Portuguese gunners, technical advisers and sailors, the Dutch came to the aid of the Trinh. In a memorable sea battle fought mainly by the two groups of European specialists on behalf of the Vietnamese, the Portuguese had the upper hand, thus consolidating the independence of their clients, the Nguyễn. While the Trinh were bottled up in the north, the Nguyễn organized Vietnamese expansion further to the south into the Mekong delta. Under them, the last vestiges of a Cham vassal state were eliminated, and Cambodian territory south of Champā was gradually annexed, until in the second half of the seventeenth century the southern Vietnamese even occupied Phnom Penh. Under the Nguyễn several thousand Ming Chinese refugees were also settled in the Mekong delta and contributed actively to its colonization. From 1674, however, for exactly one hundred years, the war between the two Vietnams, divided along nearly the same demarcation line as at present, was reduced to a mere cold one.

At the end of that time, in 1773, a revolution started, the so-called Tay-son rebellion, named after the village from which the three brothers who were its leaders, came. For a very short time the rebels re-unified all Vietnam, but at the turn of the century they were suppressed by the only member of the Nguyễn family who escaped a massacre, Nguyễn Anh. He



had come under the influence of a French missionary, Bishop Pigneau de Béhaine, who skilfully organized French help for his protégé in the form of a small but very efficient corps of specialists, technicians, and military advisers. Largely thanks to this support, in 1802 Nguyễn Anh was able to defeat the Tay-son brothers and to declare himself emperor of a re-unified Vietnam under the throne name Gia Long. Two years later he received investiture from the Chinese, together with the grant of the name for his country which it bears to this day. This first French presence left a certain mark on Vietnamese civilization which was to be intensified half a century later, when the French, exasperated by the increasingly isolationist and anti-Western course of Gia Long's successors, including the persecution of missionaries, intervened in earnest.

Most of the dramatic events related in the preceding pages resulted in the forced migration of thousands and often tens of thousands of people from one country to another. One of the main aims of wars in this area must have been to secure human booty as much as material gain or the possession of territory. Whoever took a town, conquered a kingdom, or raided a settlement, led away after victory as many of the inhabitants as he possibly could, to be settled in his own country, which they helped to populate, to develop, and thus to strengthen. The whole process would only be repeated by his antagonist a few years later in the opposite direction. Môn, Khmers, Menam-Thais, Lao-Thais, Burmans, and to a lesser extent Vietnamese, were thus shifted *en masse* from one country to the other over many centuries. The result is such an unbelievable ethnic mixture in virtually all countries of mainland South-east Asia that nationalist considerations based on race or ethnic groups in the area have become all but meaningless. Without really wanting to do so or even knowing that they were doing it, the nations of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula have thus again achieved a certain measure of the similarity with which they started before various outside influences made them look so different from each other.

#### EUROPEAN COLONIZATION, DECOLONIZATION AND NATIONALISM

Seen from the viewpoint of an observer a few centuries hence, the European colonial occupation of all of South-east Asia except Thailand must look like a short episode indeed, a mere colonial interlude, not much more important in relation to the long and complex history of this area than, say, the rule of a Persian king was for that of Funan, or the short time of Thai rule in Burma after the Mongol invasion. Admittedly, European occupation exerted a great influence on local civilizations in many fields, probably more psychologically than materially, and, given the acceleration of history, this influence cannot be compared with one of similar duration two thousand years ago. Much of this influence cannot yet



be properly assessed, and speculations about it, though frequent nowadays, are often simply idle talk.

Nevertheless, two conclusions regarding the effect of European colonization in mainland South-east Asia can be drawn safely. One is that, in the domain of material culture, Western influence seems to affect countries in the area far more after decolonization than during colonial times. In some cases, however, this influence is in no way connected with either colonization or decolonization. Inhabitants of rural Thailand are probably more 'Westernized' now than any other mainland South-east Asian peasant, although their country was the only one not to have been colonized politically by a Western power. The transistor radios, motor cycles and numerous other items of 'Western' civilization one finds in every village there are mostly made in Japan, Hong Kong or Taiwan. Knowledge of English is probably more widespread in Thailand than in many countries formerly colonized by the British, or than other European languages in the countries of the corresponding colonial past. In more remote places one is likely to be told that one is the first European the locals have seen except for those on TV.

The second conclusion is that, in the political domain, European colonial occupation did not affect the countries involved in a lasting way, by giving their political development a significantly different direction, but merely 'froze' existing situations. After decolonization, events took up their course again where they had been stopped by European intervention. Cambodia is a case in point. French 'protection' gone, the Vietnamese now continued to advance into Khmer territory as they did before the coming of the French whom, as fellow colonialists, they beat only by a short head, arriving in some areas of the Mekong delta a mere century before them, and in parts of present Cambodia even less. Whether the continuation of this advance is made under the name of Communism or anti-Communism is, historically speaking, irrelevant.

A sweeping assessment of the effects of this colonial interlude in South-east Asia is not only difficult but downright impossible, for the simple fact that there is no such thing as a Colonial Period there. Half a dozen 'Western' powers, including the United States (which came from the east), some kingdoms or empires, other republics (one even a former colony itself), all with totally different backgrounds and widely varying interests, intervened in South-east Asian affairs for different reasons at different times and in different parts of the area. What, for instance, could be common to the influences transmitted by a seventeenth-century Spanish monk in the Philippines, a French Foreign Legionary fighting in Tonkin in the late nineteenth century, and a British colonial administrator in Burma in 1947, influences which were, moreover, applied to peoples who reacted differently and lived in different phases of development?

Leaving out the establishment of the Portuguese in Malacca in 1511,



which had little to do with colonizing in the generally accepted sense of the word, the first venture in colonization in South-east Asia was that of Spain in the Philippines. Of all European colonial activities in the area it had the strongest effects upon the colonized people—not only in the political field but also in shaping their civilization. In writings about the history of South-east Asia, and in particular about the indigenous 'traditional' civilizations in the area, the Philippines are often dealt with only superficially or are left out altogether, because knowledge of the pre-Spanish civilizations there is still fragmentary. However, a great deal of archaeological and anthropological research has recently taken place in the Philippines and has resulted in a much better appreciation of prehistoric developments. It has shown, amongst other things, that Indian cultural influence must have been quite considerable and that the indigenous peoples were by no means savages at the time of their 'discovery'. It is nevertheless fairly clear that there have never been kingdoms and high

Entrance to Spanish-built Fort Santiago, Manila. Fort Santiago was built in Intramuros, the oldest part of Manila, to protect the entrance to the Pasig River. The entrance gate, with reliefs of Spanish soldiers on both sides, leads also to the Rizal Memorial shrine which is housed in the fort.





civilizations in the Philippines similar to those in the Indo-Chinese Peninsula or the western part of the Indonesian Archipelago. In other words, the Philippines as they are now are politically speaking a Spanish creation, and Philippine civilization has also been greatly conditioned by Spain. Once Spain was solidly established there as a colonial power in the last decades of the sixteenth century, the many small local political units were gradually welded together into one country, and conversion to the Catholic faith was undertaken on a massive scale, resulting eventually in the situation unique for South-east Asia, that colonized and colonizers shared a common faith. The effects this was to have on the development of nationalism can easily be imagined.

Today the population of the Philippines is thirty-eight million and growing steadily. But it was estimated at only half a million at the establishment of Spanish rule in about 1580. Since a report of 1620 boasts of 500 000 baptisms, this process of conversion must have been practically completed in less than two generations' time. From then on the Philippines, through their pre-Spanish background an integral part of South-east Asia, turned their back to the rest of the area, being attached to the vice-kingdom of Mexico and thus ruled from the east. To this day, similarities between Philippine civilization and those of Latin America are striking, although there is much in the former civilization which is unequivocally South-east Asian. The take-over by the United States at the turn of the century, after

Kambulo village near Banaue, Central Ifugao, surrounded by terraced rice-fields. According to a new theory, the Ifugao, the builders of these terraced rice-fields, were pushed into the mountains of Northern Luzon by the Spaniards.





more than three centuries of Spanish rule and a few months of an independent Republic of the Philippines, only turned the Philippines still more firmly to the east, away from South-east Asia, and made Philippine civilization still more complex by the introduction of certain new features which have caused many Filipinos to doubt whether they will ever overcome their 'cultural indigestion'. Turning back to South-east Asia would seem the best way to achieve this.

Abortive attempts to establish European influence were made in the late sixteenth century in Cambodia, in the seventeenth century in Thailand, and in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in Vietnam. If we exclude these, the next Europeans to colonize part of mainland South-east Asia were the British in Burma. Their intervention was prompted by the fear that the Burmans might dispute their possession of some territories in eastern India. But strategic considerations of a different nature, namely the wish to secure control over the eastern shores of the Bay of Bengal, seem to have played a rôle also, as did commercial considerations connected with the desire to gain access to the supposedly fabulous but largely unknown market of China. Burma was made British in three stages by the three Anglo-Burmese Wars during the nineteenth century, and was eventually incorporated into the Indian Empire. What Indian kings, brahmans, missionaries and traders did not achieve, because they did not want it, the British made a reality—an Indianized kingdom became politically part of India! Only in 1935 was Burma separated from India again, and twelve years later, at the beginning of 1948, it became independent, showing as the most important colonial heritage an Irrawaddy delta transformed into a huge rice-field as a result of the introduction by the British of the concept of capitalism, which the present government is trying to eradicate.

The French were the last Western Europeans to colonize a South-east Asian region, well after the Spaniards, the Dutch, and the British. Their intervention was partly prompted by that of the last-named nation. The French wished to keep up with the Joneses, particularly the British Joneses, to secure a foothold in the East from which to reach China, and to acquire as large a slice of the South-east Asian cake as possible for its own sake, if only in order to deny it to a rival. These seem to have been as much the reasons for this venture as genuinely idealistic considerations such as spreading French civilization, protecting Christians and the like. The latter wish was indeed the immediate cause of their intervention in 1858-9, but by then the southern part of Burma had already become British, and another slice was soon to go. The successors of Gia Long, although owing their throne largely to French help, had come to the conclusion that the only way to avoid sharing Burma's fate was to rely on their own traditions, to eliminate alien bodies and ideas, and to close the door to further Western influence. Hence they persecuted Christians. The result was of course

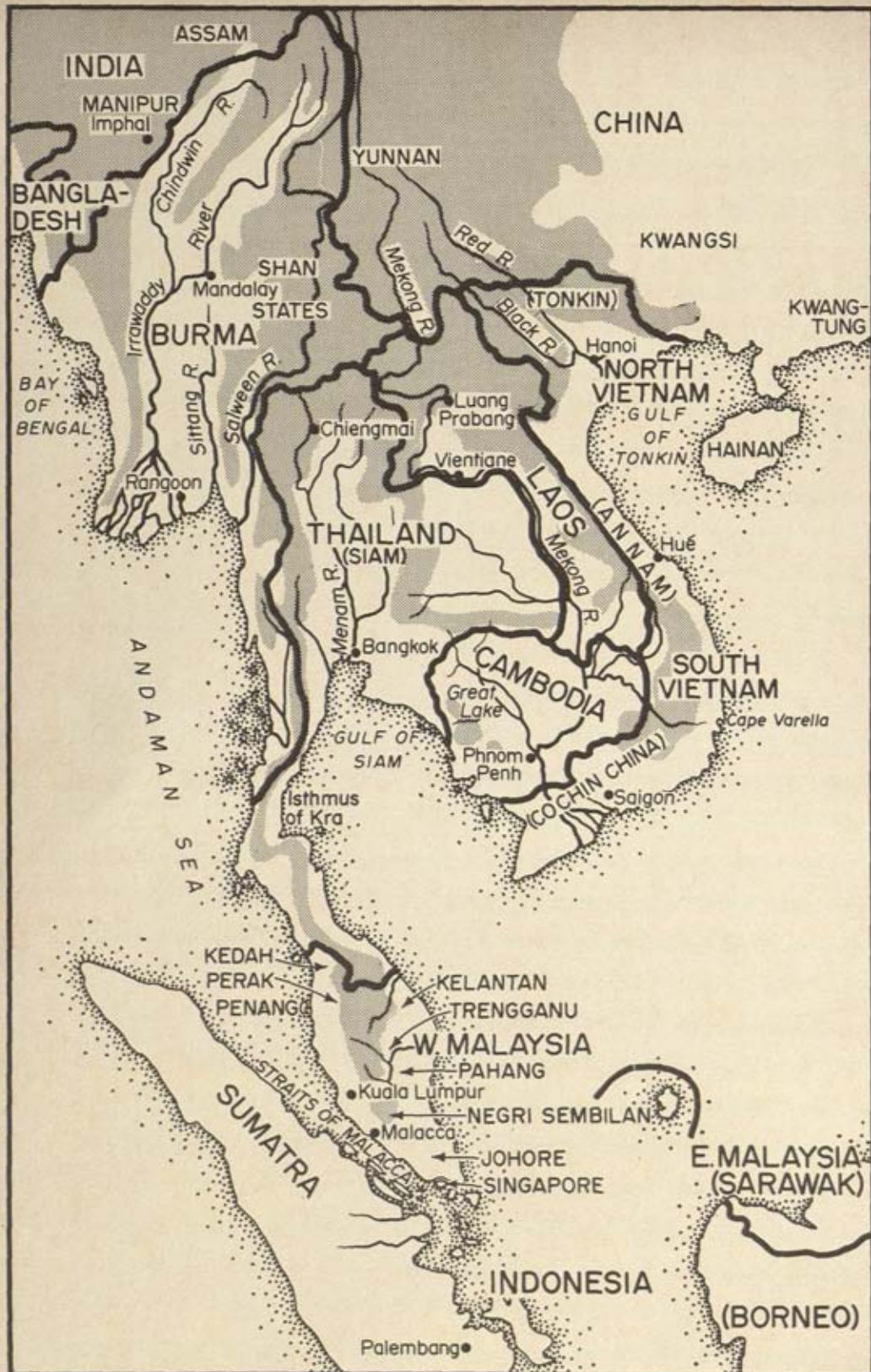


exactly contrary to what the Vietnamese emperors hoped. After some initial campaigns throughout the country, efforts were concentrated on its southernmost part, Cochin China. This was the most recently occupied, and therefore the most un-Vietnamese region of the empire. It eventually became the only real French colony of the area, the other parts of Vietnam, as well as the kingdoms of Cambodia and Laos, never having officially been more than protectorates.

France's policy in what was then called 'Indo-China' was on the whole assimilationist. Thus French influence on the civilizations of the area—and in particular on that of Vietnam—was somewhat more marked than that of the British on Burmese civilization, although not as decisive as Spanish influence on the Philippines. Apart from direct influence in the form of the introduction, through French education, of Western philosophical concepts, destined to break the embrace of Confucianism, the most important and lasting effect of French rule on the civilization of Vietnam was an indirect one. There had existed since the thirteenth century a Vietnamese script, *chu' nô'm*, based on the Chinese writing system, but it was never widely used. By making compulsory the use of romanized script for Vietnamese, the *quốc ngữ*, invented by a French missionary in the seventeenth century but little used since then, the French enabled the Vietnamese to communicate in written form with each other in their own language instead of only in Chinese. This opened the door to the development of one of the richest modern literatures in South-east Asia. With the introduction of *quốc ngữ* by the French, Vietnamese civilization was thus made more Vietnamese.

As is well known, the only country in South-east Asia not to have become the colony of a Western power is Thailand, the former Siam. This does not mean, however, that this country's civilization was preserved and protected from Western influence as the emperors of Vietnam had tried to do with theirs. The opposite is true. It was to the credit of Siamese kings such as Mongkut, or Rama IV, from the middle of the nineteenth century on, that they realized that, contrary to the belief of their Vietnamese contemporaries, the best way to avoid Western political domination was to open the door wide to Western influence and to learn from the West as much as possible so as to be the better prepared to resist it in the political field. This they did, taking care that this Western influence did not emanate from one single country which might then be tempted to follow up its cultural preponderance by some sort of 'protection'. Spreading their net wide and wisely, the kings of Siam in the second half of the nineteenth century called into the country advisers and experts from Great Britain, the U.S.A., France, Germany, Italy, Denmark, Belgium, and other countries, in order to modernize the kingdom. During this process a number of elements of Western civilization were of course adopted by the Thais and promptly adapted to their own cultural background, although this is





Post-colonial map of South-east Asia.



less visible in the remoter parts of the kingdom, which have been 'Westernized' only more recently.

Nevertheless, it would be misleading to see in this far-sighted policy of Thai monarchs, who were also at that time usually the nation's best writers and greatest promoters of all traditional Thai art forms, the only reason for Siam's continuing independence while all her neighbours came under European domination. The geographical situation of the Menam Basin, between the zones of influence of two rival European powers, meant that each of these jealously watched over it so that the other one might not get it, and both agreed tacitly to leave it as a buffer zone between them. Britain, having achieved her aim of controlling the entire Bay of Bengal, was not very interested in the area on the other side of the mountain chain from which no threat could come; and France, once she had found out that the Mekong, because of the rapids at Khône near the present Khmero-Laotian border could not be used as a means of penetration into China, was also not very keen to burden herself with unnecessary possessions. Thus the area where possibly the earliest Indian-influenced high civilization in South-east Asia developed and which, as the first important centre of Buddhism, was influential in the shaping of civilizations throughout the peninsula, was now saved from foreign domination by its being the very centre of mainland South-east Asia.

As there was not *one* Colonial Period in the area, neither was there *one* nationalist movement throughout South-east Asia or even in its mainland part. Each country, being affected differently by influences from different sources and in different intensity, reacted differently, conditioned by a variety of contexts and backgrounds. Even within the same country, the growth of nationalism was not always homogeneous throughout. In Vietnam, for instance, reaction to French rule, or to political developments taking place in China or Japan, was markedly different in the colonial South, the imperial Centre, and the traditional North. While there was hardly any nationalist movement at all in French-dominated Laos, a wave of nationalism swept Thailand, which had always been independent anyway. In Burma, Buddhism played a great rôle in the nationalist movement, while Vietnamese nationalists were never much concerned with religious questions, although Buddhism also had a certain nationalist appeal to the masses. The Philippines, the only twice colonized country, was a totally different case again, in which the fight between the two colonizing powers themselves, and conflicting loyalties, influenced the growth of nationalism in a uniquely complicated manner. Perhaps it is due to the length of the Spanish occupation and the depth of its influence that the Philippines produced the first modern-style anti-colonialist liberation movement, initiated by a Filipino doctor and novelist, José Rizal, who was captured and executed by the Spaniards in 1896.

Looking at it from a distance, and taking into consideration the long

and often dramatic history of mainland South-east Asia, with its pre- and proto-historic background common to all parts of the area, its cultural influences from India which also affected all countries there, though in varying degrees of intensity, the constant relations—peaceful or otherwise—between all the countries of the region and the equally incessant mixing of populations, one cannot escape the impression that nationalism in mainland South-east Asia is an utterly artificial phenomenon, because it is based mostly on questionable foundations. Nationalism, well founded or not, does however exist there as a political reality, even in comparatively intense forms, and no wishful thinking will make it disappear overnight. But one hopes and wishes that the peoples of South-east Asia will soon see what they have in common rather than what divides them, and will find prosperity and peace together in the natural regionalism from which they started on their collision courses two thousand years ago.



NOTES ON PRONUNCIATION OF THE LANGUAGES OF MAINLAND  
SOUTH-EAST ASIA

The area contains several important languages and numerous lesser ones, and these have many differences one from another. Burmese, Thai and Cambodian have their own scripts, derived from those of early India, and the Vietnamese formerly wrote in Chinese characters, though now they use Roman script with an elaborate system of diacritics to mark distinctions in sound which are quite clear to the people who speak the language, but are hardly distinguishable to others without much training and practice. Here they have mostly been omitted. The following broad general rules will help the reader to approximate his pronunciation very roughly to that of the people concerned.

The vowels have approximately their continental values, as in Spanish or Italian: *a* as in English *calm*, *e* as in *fame*, *i* as in *machine*, *o* as in *home*, *u* as in *rule*.

Avoid the temptation to pronounce *th* as in *thing* and *ph* as in *phone*. As in Indian languages, these are to be pronounced like the simple letter, but with a stronger emission of breath, rather like the sounds in *pothook* and *uphill*. The same applies to the other consonants followed by *h*, *kh*, *gh*, *dh* and *bh*. An exception occurs in Vietnamese, where *ph* is pronounced approximately like English *f*.

*Ng* at the beginning of a word, common in Vietnamese and also occurring in some other languages, is pronounced almost exactly like the *ng* in English *song*, never as in *finger*. Since this sound never occurs at the beginning of a word or syllable in any European language except Welsh, its pronunciation may be found difficult, but in fact it is a very common sound in English.

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4

Indonesia  
and Malaysia

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ANN KUMAR



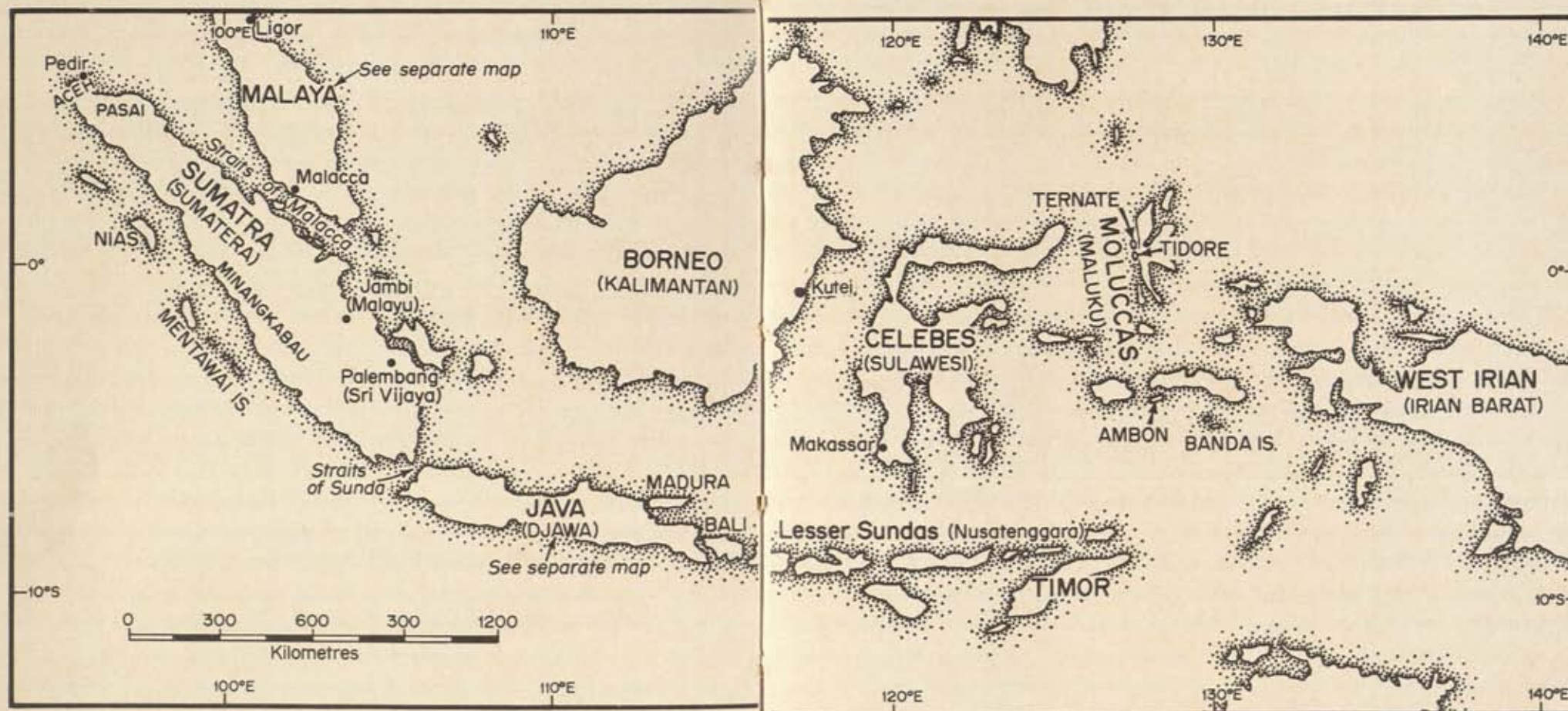


The political boundaries of the Federation of Malaysia and the Republic of Indonesia, and the smaller island republic of Singapore are comparatively recent, dating from an arrangement between the British and Dutch colonial powers in 1824. Until then the historical development of the three countries had been closely connected, with particularly strong links between western Indonesia and the Malay Peninsula.

This region as a whole contains a great variety of language groups, cultures, and types of society. (Indonesia alone, both in area and in population, is by far the largest of the states of present-day South-east Asia.) It would be impossible to give a detailed account of this diversity here, but some general distinctions can be made. The most densely populated areas are usually those where irrigated rice is grown, the chief examples being the volcanic plains of central Java and of Bali. It is in settled agrarian societies like these that literature and the arts, and the study of philosophy and religion, have found the most favourable conditions for their development. A second type of society is more maritime than agrarian, and is found naturally enough in areas close to the sea. These maritime peoples, such as the Buginese and Makassarese of Celebes, often travelled considerable distances in their search for sea-borne trade, and sometimes came to play a rôle in the history of places quite distant from their homeland. Besides these two types of society, there are a number of tribal peoples scattered throughout the region. Most of these peoples—the Dayaks of Borneo are one example—have agriculture of the shifting or 'swidden' kind, but there are a few small groups, such as the Kubu of east Sumatra and the Semang of the Malay Peninsula, who have no agriculture at all, living entirely from hunting and food-gathering. These various tribal groups are perhaps of less interest to the historian, since they have remained small, fairly isolated units with little influence on the mainstream of the region's history.

#### THE 'INDIANIZATION' OF THE REGION

We have already seen something of the prehistory of South-east Asia and the type of civilization existing there in the neolithic stage of development. It was probably early in the Christian era that South-east Asian societies



Locator reference map of places in Indonesia and Malaysia referred to in the text.





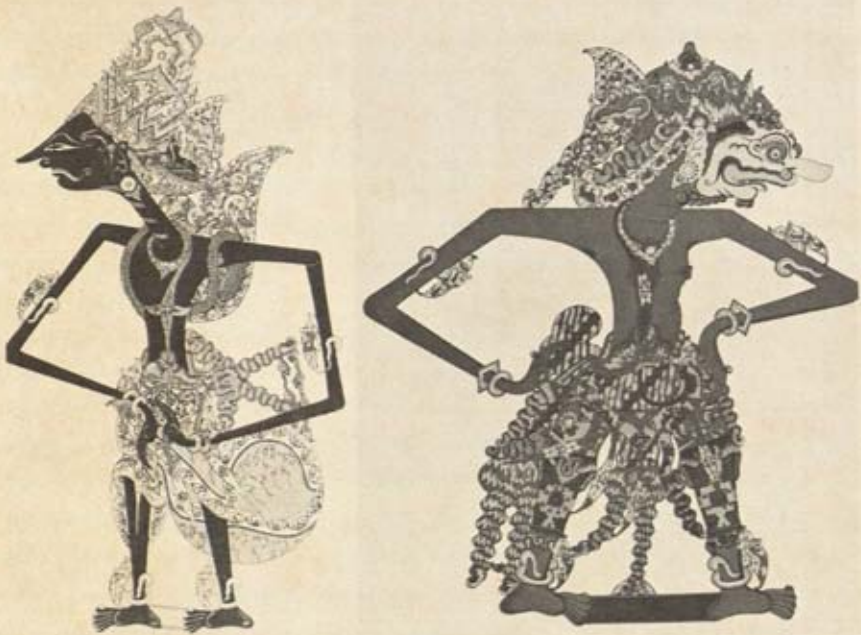
Left: a bronze Buddha statue found at Kota Bangun, Borneo; right: Malay prau.

first came into contact with the civilization of India, although we have practically no evidence of the exact nature of these early contacts. This has led to the formulation of various theories. It has been argued, for example, that Indian civilization was brought by Indian princes who conquered parts of the region and set up small principalities there. Although there is no evidence to support this theory, it is also impossible to state definitely that this could not have happened on occasion during these early centuries of which we know so little. A second theory is that it was commerce which first drew Indians to South-east Asia, a region which had become known both in India and further west, in the Graeco-Roman world, as a 'Land of Gold', and which produced valuable commodities such as spices, camphor, and precious woods. One technical factor which may have been important in the extension of Indian trade was the development at about this time of a type of ship that could sail 'close to the wind' and transport large numbers of passengers and quantities of cargo across the ocean.

Lastly, it has been argued that more important than the desire for conquest or commerce was a missionary spirit to be found in India at that period. This is connected with the centres of Buddhism which flourished in India and sent out missionaries to other parts of the world, such as China, Tibet, and South-east Asia. Buddhism certainly played an important part in the Indianization of the region, and for this reason the alternative term 'Hinduization' is rather misleading, even though Hindu influences were certainly present and sometimes dominant. One indication of the part

played by Buddhism is the number of Buddha statues found. The earliest ones are in the Amarāvātī style (a style of the second and third centuries in India) and later ones in the Gupta and Pāla styles (respectively fourth to seventh centuries, and eighth century onwards).

Indian civilization has influenced this region, as well as the rest of South-east Asia with the exception of Vietnam, through its religion and philosophy, its art and architecture, and through its literature, written in the Sanskrit language, which has given many words to the vocabularies of the Malayo-Indonesian languages. However, it must be said that at first Indian civilization affected only a small proportion of the population, those who lived in the capital cities of the various small kingdoms. These capitals were essentially court cities, consisting of the residences of the ruler, his family, members of the aristocracy and their dependents. South-east Asia is unlike other parts of Asia, such as China or Japan, in that very large cities did not develop until quite recently, and the societies of the region were always basically rural peasant societies. It was in the courts that the Indianized culture flourished and, after the period of the earliest contacts, the initiative in its development was taken by the indigenous rulers and



Left: *Wayang* theatre figure of the Hindu god, Krishna; right: *Wayang* theatre representation of a daemonic character.



aristocracy themselves. Thus a foreign graft took root on native stock and developed its own special characteristics.

#### THE 'INDIANIZED' KINGDOMS OF INDONESIA

It is only in the fifth century A.D. that written history begins in this region—rather a late date when compared with the situation in other parts of Asia. Even after this time the historical source material is rather poor and hard to interpret accurately. The two main sources are inscriptions and written texts, the written texts being not from Indonesia itself, but mainly from China.

The earliest Sanskrit inscriptions from this region are found in Borneo and Java. At Kutei, on the east coast of Borneo, there are seven pillar inscriptions in a sort of sanctuary, erected by a king bearing the Sanskrit name of Mūlavarman. They seem to date from about 400 A.D. The Javanese inscriptions are somewhat later, probably about 450 A.D. There are four of them, erected (near present-day Jakarta) by a king called Pūrṇavarman. The inscriptions say that Pūrṇavarman observed the Hindu rites, was a great conqueror, and promoted irrigation works. He was ruler of the kingdom of Tārumā, which continued to exist into the second half of the seventh century A.D. This seems to have been the first of the many Indianized kingdoms of Java.

One of the earliest pieces of information on this region provided by Chinese texts comes from the pilgrim Fa-hsien who went to study Buddhism



Inscription of Pūrṇavarman, from about the middle of the 5th century.

in India at the beginning of the fifth century. On his return home he visited a country which he calls 'Ye-p'o-ti', the Chinese rendering of the Sanskrit 'Yavadvīpa', Island of Java. This is an example of the completely different form which Sanskrit names assume in Chinese, owing to the different structure of the two languages, so that the Chinese texts are often very difficult for the historian to interpret.

#### SUMATRA: THE RISE OF ŚRĪ VIJAYA

In the seventh century a new power appears in the Malayo-Indonesian world—the Buddhist kingdom of Śrī Vijaya, based on Palembang in South Sumatra. The first account we have comes from another Chinese pilgrim, I-ching, who set out in 671 with the intention of studying at the Buddhist University of Nālandā, in Bengal. He embarked on a Persian ship and his first port of call was Palembang, where he stayed for six months to learn Sanskrit grammar. He tells us that there were over one thousand Buddhist monks there, so Śrī Vijaya must have been an important Buddhist centre at the time. After his six months' studies, he sailed to India in a ship belonging to the king of Śrī Vijaya and spent ten years at Nālandā. He then returned to Śrī Vijaya, where he translated the Buddhist texts he had acquired in India from Sanskrit into Chinese. In 695 he finally returned to China.

It seems that Śrī Vijaya was primarily a maritime power, not an agrarian state like those of central Java. An inscription at Ligor on the Malay Peninsula, dated 775 and commemorating the foundation of a Buddhist sanctuary by the king of Śrī Vijaya, shows that by then the kingdom controlled both sides of the Straits of Malacca. This was important on account of the growing volume of sea-borne trade between India and China, a trade which could be taxed by the power that held the Straits.

#### JAVA TO 1006

After the inscriptions of Pūrṇavarman, there are no more from this island until 732 A.D., the date of the inscription of Sanjaya, ruler of the kingdom of Mataram in central Java. This inscription comes from a sanctuary dedicated to the Hindu god, Śiva, showing that the state religion was then a form of Hinduism. Sanjaya's successor, however, appears to have acknowledged as his overlord another monarch, who belonged to the Śailendra dynasty. This dynasty was not Hindu but Buddhist.

During the eighth century there was a great flowering of the arts, especially architecture and sculpture, in central Java. This period is sometimes called 'classical', because the style of the statues is still rather close to Indian models such as those of the Gupta period. The architectural remains are all buildings of a religious nature, as commonly happens in South-east Asia, since their superior construction means that they have



outlasted all other buildings. The Javanese word for temple is *candi* (pronounced 'chandy') and many of the eighth-century *candis* are also mausoleums, housing the ashes of the dead king, who was thought to have become one with the god to whom the temple was dedicated and was worshipped together with that god. This concept was not part of the Indian religions and may be a survival of the ancient Indonesian custom of ancestor-worship.

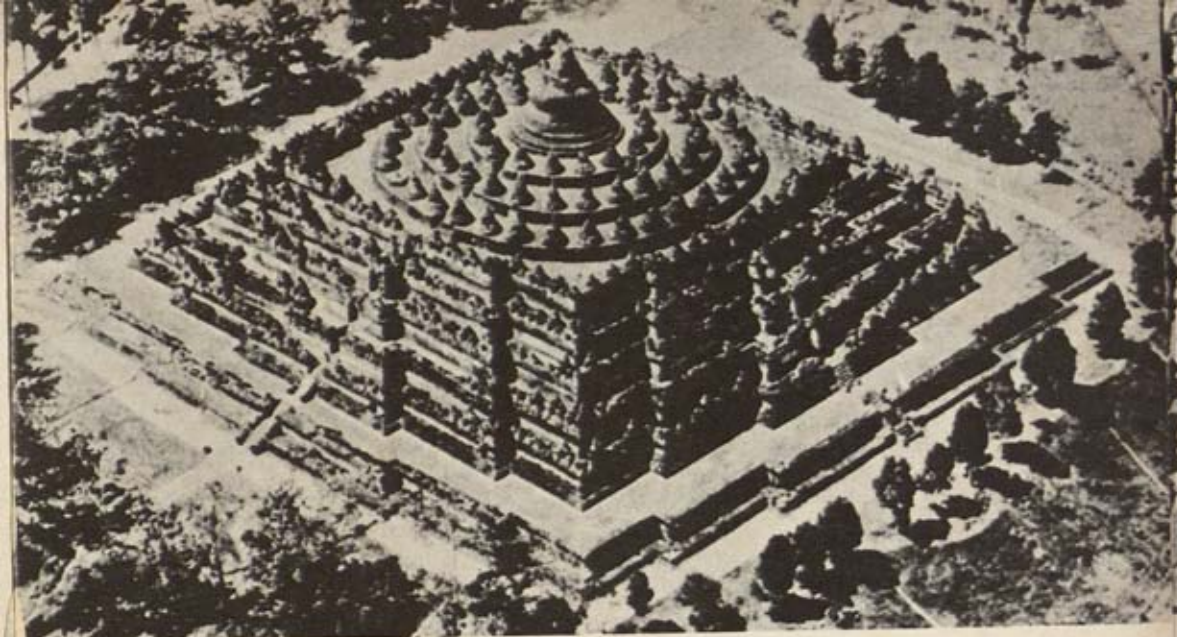
The earliest of the eighth century *candis* (which are found on the Dieng Plateau near Semarang, and are now in a state of ruin) are dedicated to Śiva, but the later monuments were built by the Śailendras and are therefore Buddhist. The first of these, Candi Kalasan, was built in 778 and is dedicated to the Buddhist goddess, Tārā. It also seems to have housed the ashes of a dead queen, who was considered to have become one with the goddess.

By far the most famous of all the Śailendra monuments is the Borobudur, which probably dates from about the same period as Candi Kalasan. The Borobudur is remarkable for the fact that it is built in terraces up a hill, completely open to the sky, with no inner chambers or halls. Above the base of this monument there are four levels of galleries or corridors on a square plan, enclosed by walls on either side as one walks along, but with no roof. These walls are carved with scenes depicting the lives of the Buddha and the various Bodhisattvas, and there are niches which contain Buddha statues. Above the square galleries there are three circular terraces, completely open and without walls. On these terraces there are many bell-shaped *stūpas* (a *stūpa* being originally a mound covering a Buddhist relic) whose stone is carved into diamond-shaped lattice work, through which the Buddha statues inside can be seen. The more austere aspect of the round terraces is said to symbolize the detachment of the enlightened Buddhist from material forms. At the very top of the monument is a large *stūpa* of plain stone, and it is not known whether this once held a statue of the Supreme Buddha, or whether it was left empty to indicate that this Supreme Being has no physical form.

The last half of the eighth century was not only a period of artistic achievement under Śailendra patronage, but also saw the expansion of their military activities in a series of raids on the Indo-Chinese Peninsula. In the ninth century, probably about 850, one of the Śailendra dynasty, Bālaputra, became ruler of the Sumatran kingdom of Śrī Vijaya. He is famous for founding a Buddhist monastery at Nālandā. From the 860's, however, the Śailendra power in central Java seems to have waned, so that only the Sumatran branch of the dynasty remained.

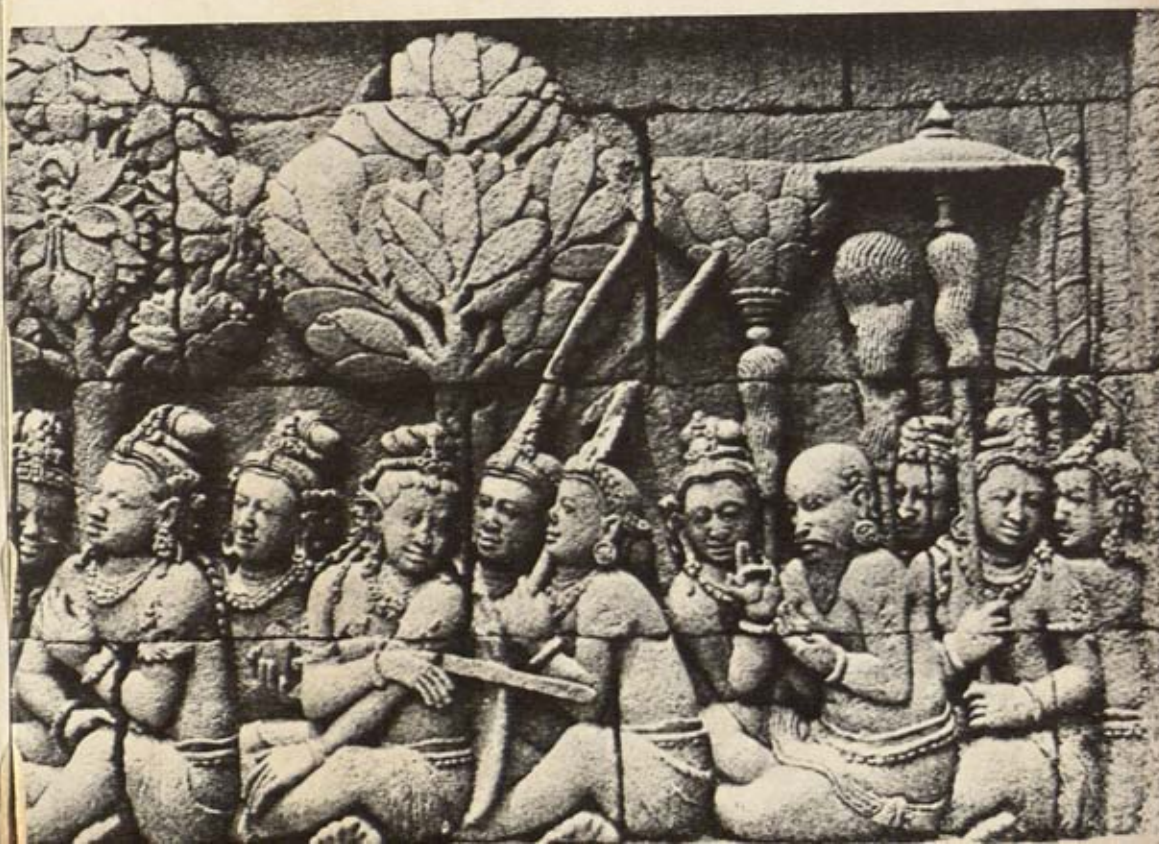
In central Java there was a Hindu dynasty once again, and embassies were sent to the Chinese court in 860 and 873. The T'ang history tells us that the Javanese of that time made wooden fortifications, had an alphabet and astronomy, and that the country produced gold, silver, rhinoceros horns, and ivory. Although this text mentions the Javanese





Aerial view of Borobudur, showing the square and round terraces.

Borobudur relief, showing Central Javanese style.







Buddha from one of the perforated dagobs of the Borobudur. All these are in the attitude of teaching (dharma-cakra mudrā).

alphabet, and it is obvious that a civilization which built monuments embodying the philosophical concepts of Buddhism must also have had theological works and possibly other literature, nothing of this survives. In fact, the survival rate of Javanese literature of any period is not very high. This is largely due to the fact that it is inscribed on the leaves of the *lontar* palm (cut into narrow strips shaped like rulers) which is attacked by insects and the damp tropical climate. Because of this it is necessary for a work to be constantly re-copied if it is not to be lost for ever.

The first surviving example of Javanese literature comes from the reign of Sindok (c. 929-47) and is a translation of the Indian epic, the *Rāmāyana*. Sindok established a new principality in east Java, in the valley of the Brantas river. It is not known for certain why this shift took place, though it has been suggested that central Java was affected by earthquake, plague, or volcanic eruption. When Sindok's daughter married a Balinese prince, the island of Bali was increasingly influenced by Hindu-Javanese culture, and the Javanese of this period (known as Old Javanese) came to be used as the literary language there.



Relief showing East Javanese style (*Rāmāyana* scene from Candi Surawana, 14th century).

The last Javanese ruler of the century was Dharmavamsa (c. 985-1006). Under his patronage a translation of the other great Indian epic, the *Mahābhārata* was begun, and also the codification of Javanese law. Dharmavamsa seems to have followed a policy of military expansion; he established Javanese rule over Bali, and had a base on the west coast of Borneo. Chinese records of the year 992 supply the information that the Javanese had invaded Śrī Vijaya, and that there was continued hostility between the two kingdoms. This invasion was to have serious consequences for Dharmavamsa.

#### ŚRĪ VIJAYA IN THE TENTH AND ELEVENTH CENTURIES

Arab ships had begun to penetrate into South-east Asian waters as early as the beginning of the seventh century, and in later centuries arrived in increasing numbers to buy luxury goods such as precious woods and, particularly, the pepper of Sumatra and the spices of the Moluccas and Bandas (the 'Spice Islands'). In the tenth century certain Arab accounts describe the kingdom of Śrī Vijaya, commenting upon the fertility of the land and the wide extent of the realm. One writer, Masūdī, writing in 995 says that the Mahārāja (the ruler of Śrī Vijaya) rules over an enormous population and has armies too large to number. His kingdom produces more varieties of perfume than any other, as well as camphor, aloes, cloves, sandalwood, musk, cardamom and other spices.

The ruler of Śrī Vijaya at the end of the tenth century cultivated good relations with both China and the Chola kings of south India, as a counter-balance to the hostile Javanese. He did not receive military aid from either power but nevertheless he launched a great counter-attack against Java in





8th century ship from the reliefs of Borobudur.

1006, resulting in the death of Dharmavamśa and the destruction of his capital.

Relations between Śrī Vijaya and the Chola Kingdom seem to have deteriorated not long after the attack on Java, and in 1025 the Chola ruler sent an expedition which actually took Palembang, the capital of Śrī Vijaya, and captured the king. The Chola were also able to take several cities on the Sumatran coast, and those parts of the Malay Peninsula, including Kedah, which were held by Śrī Vijaya. The reasons for this expedition—which was a raid for booty rather than a permanent conquest—are not clear, although it has been suggested that the Cholas, as an expanding maritime power, may have resented Śrī Vijaya's attempts to control and tax all shipping passing through the Straits of Malacca. By the 1060's, however, relations between the two powers seem to have been good once again, and a Tamil inscription dated 1088 from Baros, on the west coast of Sumatra, shows that south Indian merchants were active in Śrī Vijaya at that time.

Although, as the 1006 expedition shows, Śrī Vijaya must have been a power of comparable strength, it has left no monuments to compare with those of Java. A few brick towers are all that remain. The explanation of this probably lies in the different nature of the empire of Śrī Vijaya; it was primarily a maritime empire, based on sea-borne trade. The Javanese

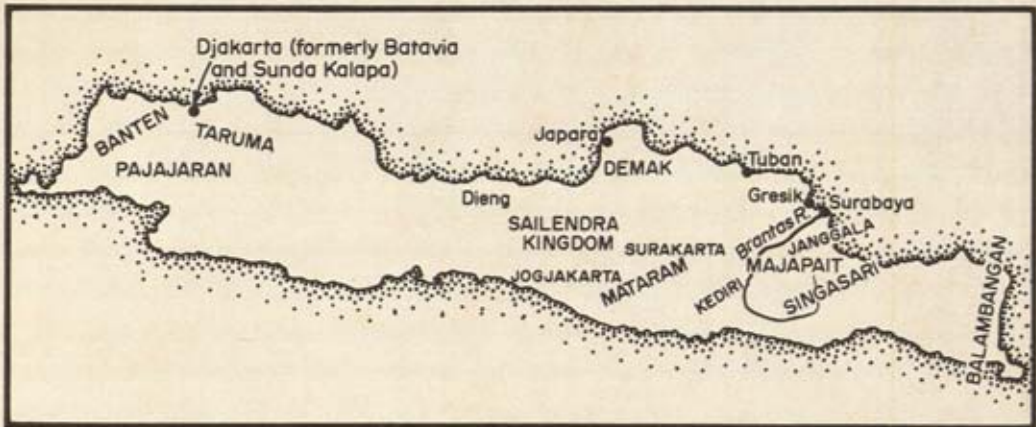


kingdoms, with their more substantial agricultural base and denser population, had a more settled society with a labour surplus which could be used for the construction of great monuments.

Śrī Vijaya was not entirely without civilization, however, and seems to have been a Buddhist centre of considerable renown. The Buddhist scholar Atiśa, who reformed Tibetan Buddhism, is said to have studied under Dharmakīrti, the head of the Śrī Vijaya clergy, and Atiśa's biography calls Sumatra the chief centre of Buddhism and Dharmakīrti the greatest scholar of his time.

#### JAVA FROM 1006 TO 1268

Dharmavamsa's heir, Airlangga, is said to have escaped at the time of the Śrī Vijayan attack, taking refuge in a monastery. In 1019 he was consecrated as king, but his authority extended over only a tiny area of east Java. In the next two decades he had to undertake a series of wars against petty princes in order to reconquer his father's kingdom. He seems to have married a Śrī Vijayan princess, perhaps because Śrī Vijaya, weakened after the Chola expedition, sought a reconciliation.



Java.

During Airlangga's reign the Javanese kingdom developed quite an extensive trade with other parts of Asia, and traders from all parts of India, as well as Burmans, Cambodians, and Chams (from the kingdom of Champā, which was situated in what is now South Vietnam) came to the ports of north-east Java.

It was also a time of literary activity, when the translation of the various episodes of the *Mahābhārata* was continued, and other Javanese



works based on the Hindu epics were composed. Although the king himself seems to have been a devotee of the Hindu god Vishnu, Buddhism continued to flourish alongside Hinduism.

After Airlangga's death, his kingdom was divided into two halves, the western half being called Kędiri, and the eastern one Janggala. Early in the twelfth century these two regions were re-united by a marriage alliance. We have little information about the following period, although King Jayabhaya (1135-57) is known to have been a patron of literature and in his reign the Javanese *Bhāratayuddha* ('War of the Bharatas', based on the *Mahābhārata* story) was composed. A Chinese source, the Sung dynastic history, tells us that Java had wide trading connections. In 1222, a new dynasty was founded by a usurper, Ken Angrok, who overthrew the last of Airlangga's descendants.



Javanese villager and her children.

This new kingdom was called Singasari, and in its art and religion we can see new developments. As far as art is concerned, there is a movement away from purely Indian canons. The sculptural style becomes more distinctively Javanese, and there is a tendency to more lavish ornamentation on the monuments. The religion of this period seems to have been a sort

of synthesis of Hinduism and Buddhism, with devotion to the Hindu god Śiva considered as the first step to enlightenment, and Buddhism the higher path to be taken by those who had already mastered the early stages. When King Vishnuvardhana died in 1268, he was cremated and his ashes were divided between two shrines. In one he was worshipped as an incarnation of Śiva, and in the other as a Bodhisattva. Vishnuvardhana was succeeded by his son Kertanagara, who had a long and important reign.

#### ŚRĪ VIJAYA IN THE TWELFTH AND THIRTEENTH CENTURIES

For the twelfth century we have little information, although the Chinese writer Chou Ch'u-fei lists Śrī Vijaya as the third of wealthy foreign states, ranking next after the Arab countries and Java. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, she was still an important power, but the process of decline seems to have begun, with certain of the outlying vassal states breaking away. Thus her control over the Malay Peninsula weakened, and the vassal prince of Ligor set himself up in 1230 as an independent king. However, she still controlled the two important sea passages, the Straits of Malacca and the Straits of Sunda (between Sumatra and Java).

The Chinese writer Chao Ju-kua's description of Palembang, written in 1225, shows that it was a river-city, with many people living on boats or in houses built on rafts. Later in the century the capital was shifted from Palembang to Jambi, then called Malayu.

In the second half of the thirteenth century three factors contributed to the breaking up of the empire of Śrī Vijaya. The first was the expansionist policy of Kertanagara, who conquered west Java and deprived Śrī Vijaya of the control of the Straits of Sunda. The second was the advance of the Thais down the Malay Peninsula, towards the end of the century. The last was the spread of Islām and the growth of small Muslim city-states. As we have seen, the Arabs had traded in these waters for some time, but it is only now that we have evidence of conversions among the local populace, and of the setting up of small Muslim principalities on the north coast. Marco Polo, who stopped at north Sumatra on his homeward voyage (begun in 1292) says that the town of Perlak had recently been converted to 'the law of Mahomet' by 'Saracen' merchants. From this time we also find Islamic tombstones, the earliest of which is that of Sultan Malik al-Saleh, ruler of the principality of Pasai, who died in 1297.

In the fourteenth century, Malayu was a rather isolated centre of the old Indianized culture, but no longer the capital of a great trading empire.

#### KERTANAGARA AND THE KINGDOM OF MAJAPAIT

Kertanagara is one of the most important figures of mediaeval Indonesian history, but also one of the most controversial. A Javanese work (the



*Nāgarakertāgama*) written in 1365 by the head of the Buddhist clergy, describes him as a saint and ascetic, but the *Pararaton*, a later Javanese chronicle, represents him as a drunkard.

At this time China was ruled by the Mongol Khans, who pursued an expansionist policy and whose power was felt in many parts of South-east Asia. Kertanagara wished to resist the extension of their influence into the Archipelago, but historians are not in agreement about the methods he used to do this. Some have represented him as pursuing a policy of military conquest, while others say that he worked to form a sort of 'holy alliance' of states in the Indonesian world. By one means or the other, Madura, Bali, West Java, and Sumatra were brought into his sphere of influence. When the Mongols demanded that he send a member of his family as envoy to Peking, he refused, and in 1289 he appears to have ill-treated the Mongol ambassadors sent to his capital.

The Mongols decided to send a punitive expedition to Java, but this did not arrive until 1292, by which time the situation there had changed dramatically. The prince of one of the regions of the kingdom had risen in revolt, and succeeded in taking the capital and killing Kertanagara. When the Chinese force found that the man they had been sent to punish was already dead, they agreed to the request for help made by his son-in-law, Prince Vijaya. Together the Chinese force and Prince Vijaya defeated the rebel; afterwards, however, Vijaya managed to make things so difficult for the Chinese that they retreated to their boats and returned home.

After his death, Kertanagara was worshipped as a 'Śiva-Buddha', which shows how the two religions of Hinduism and Buddhism had become fused into a single cult at this period of Javanese history.

Prince Vijaya became the first ruler of Majapait, the last of the great Indianized kingdoms of this part of South-east Asia. One of the most famous figures of the Majapait period is Gajah Mada, who for decades held the office of Patih—an office which in importance was comparable with that of Chancellor in Tudor England. Gajah Mada set about bringing the entire Archipelago under Majapait's control. Bali was conquered between 1331 and 1343, leading to greater Hindu-Javanese influence on its culture. The Javanese text referred to above, the *Nāgarakertāgama*, lists many vassal states—some places on the Malay peninsula, Brunei and Tanjungpura on the coast of Borneo, Makassar in Celebes, and the Banda and Molucca islands. However, it seems probable that Majapait did not rule these places directly, and the local rulers simply sent tribute as a token of vassalage.

Majapait also had an extensive international trade, dealing with Asian countries such as Siam, Burma, Cambodia, Vietnam, China, and India. In the field of home government, Gajah Mada is said to have reformed the system of justice, and drawn up regulations concerning the duties of the police, the maintenance of the army, the protection of agriculture, landholding, the payment of the royal revenues, the assessment of taxation,

and the enforcement of the labour services which the peasants had to perform for the state. A survey was made of the lands of the kingdom.

It is interesting to note that at the height of the power of Majapait, when Hindu-Javanese culture was in full flower, the first archaeological evidence of the coming of Islām to Java now emerges. Gravestones near the Majapait capital show that Islām had penetrated to central Java at least by the middle of the fourteenth century.

#### THE ARCHIPELAGO AND MALAY PENINSULA IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

At the beginning of the century, the succession to the throne of Majapait was disputed, and from 1401 to 1406 the kingdom was racked by civil war. During this period the third Ming emperor, wishing to revive China's prestige abroad, sent an embassy to Java, and between 1405 and 1433 his admiral Cheng Ho made a series of voyages not only to Champā, Java,



Two *wayang* figures, the one on the left showing the long aquiline nose, long, narrow eyes and restrained expression of the noble characters.



Sumatra, and India, but even to Arabia and east Africa. His secretary Ma Huan, who was a Muslim, wrote an account of three of these voyages.

They visited Sumatra in 1407. Palembang, once the centre of the empire of Śrī Vijaya, was now subject, at least in theory, to Majapait. The sultanates on the north coast had now been Muslim for nearly a hundred and fifty years.

In various centres throughout the region, the process of conversion to Islām was proceeding steadily, although we know very little of the historical detail. Viewed as a whole it was a fairly slow process, and in parts of Java continued right up to the nineteenth century. Even now, many elements and ideas originating in the old Hindu-Buddhist culture are still alive, and the Hindu epics, the *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata*, still play an important rôle in literature and moral philosophy. This is especially so in areas like central and east Java which were formerly the centres of Indianized kingdoms. In areas like north Sumatra, or west Java, where the Indianized culture was never as strong, Islām is less mixed with Indianized culture, though it may be adapted to local peasant beliefs and institutions.

One feature of the old culture which did not survive the spread of Islām was the sculpture and architecture of the Indianized kingdoms. Islām forbids the making of any idol or ikon, and for periods of its history the depicting of men or animals in any art form was considered a blasphemous imitation of the work of the Creator. So the temples with their statues of gods and Bodhisattvas were particularly offensive to devout Muslims. Another ancient form, however, survived and flourished. This was the *wayang*, or shadow theatre. The classical version, the *wayang kulit* or *wayang purwa* ('leather *wayang*' or 'ancient *wayang*') uses for its dramatic material the stories of the Hindu epics. It was already popular in Java in 1000 A.D., as it still is today. The puppets are made of painted leather and have jointed arms which are manipulated by the puppeteer. Their moving shadows are thrown onto the screen by the light of a lamp—the performance takes place at night. Instead of denouncing this shadow theatre, Javanese Muslims made use of its influence by writing for it dramas about Islām and its heroes. One of the early Muslim saints of Java is said to have been a skilled *wayang* puppeteer.

Another art form which shows the influence of Islām is *batik*, the art of decorating cloth by hand-drawing fine designs on it and then dyeing it by a special process. (The whole cloth is dipped into a vat of dye of a certain colour, but parts of it are covered with wax so that the dye does not affect them. Then this wax is scraped off and the cloth dipped into a second colour for those parts.) *Batik* patterns are usually geometric or very stylized, and so do not offend the Muslim prohibition against naturalistic art.

The civil war in Majapait (1401-6) mentioned above, indirectly assisted the rise of an important Islamic centre in Malaya. A prince by the name of Paramesvara, said to be a descendant of the Śailendras, left



Majapait at this time and because of the weakened state of that kingdom was able to found his own small principality at Malacca, on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula. He was later converted to Islām, and changed his name to Megat Iskander Shah.

At this time the Malay Peninsula was only sparsely settled. Much of the terrain was inhospitable—covered by dense rain forest, broken by mountain ranges, and with soils often swampy or infertile. Often the only possible means of travel was by river, from the coast up into the hinterland. Although some of the prehistoric migration waves seem to have passed down the peninsula, the migrants apparently preferred to settle in more fertile and hospitable lands such as those of central Java, Bali, and parts of Sumatra. From about the time of the Sultanate of Malacca, we find migrants from Java and, above all, Sumatra opening up the Malay Peninsula and beginning wet-rice cultivation, and also other activities such as gold-mining, using techniques they had developed in their homelands.



A Malay village house (kampong).

The chief threat to the independence of the new Sultanate of Malacca came not from Majapait, which was no longer at the height of its power, but from Thailand, which claimed suzerainty over much of the Peninsula. By cultivating the friendship of China however—Megat Iskander Shah himself made a visit to the court at Peking—Malacca managed to keep the Thais at bay and gradually the settlement grew larger and more viable. By the 1460's, Malacca had an empire of her own, which included Kedah (one of the most tin-rich parts of the peninsula) Trengganu, Johore, and Pahang, as well as certain areas across the Straits in Sumatra. She was also now the most important commercial centre in South-east Asia, with merchants from all over Asia coming to trade. Controlling the Straits of Malacca, the Sultanate also controlled the rich spice trade, and ships from the Archipelago had to put in at Malacca and pay tribute before proceeding



onwards to India. From this position she was displaced not by the Javanese or Thais, but by the first European power to enter this part of the world.

#### THE 'PORTUGUESE CENTURY'

In 1494, by the Treaty of Tordesillas, the Pope divided the world into two spheres, one Spanish and one Portuguese, for the purpose of missionary work. Under this division all South-east Asia fell within the Portuguese sphere. The Portuguese were interested not only in replacing Islām by Christianity in that part of the world, but also in the profitable spice trade centred there. When in 1510 they captured Goa in India, Malacca was obviously their next target. It fell to the third attack of the Portuguese, on 24 August 1511.

Not long after the conquest of Malacca the Portuguese established posts in the Moluccas, at Ternate and Tidore, in order to be able to control the spice trade. Later they made several settlements on Timor, and half of this island is now the last Portuguese possession in South-east Asia.

The coming of the Portuguese is often said to 'mark the beginning of a new period' in this part of Asia, but it is open to question whether the Portuguese really introduced any considerable changes. The area actually under their control was small, and the level of their technology was not greatly superior to that existing in Asia at this time, except in the important field of ship design. The situation at their various strongholds remained precarious, for they were under almost constant attack. In the Moluccas, bad relations with the local rulers imperilled their existence, and the fort at Ternate fell in 1574. Even at their chief centre, Malacca, their position was not secure. They were under attack from several quarters, and a brief description of the power structure of the region is necessary as background to the history of sixteenth century Malacca.

On the Malay Peninsula itself, Sultan Mahmud, driven out of Malacca by the Portuguese, had founded a new principality, Johore. In Sumatra, Pasai, the most important of the north coast centres of the fifteenth century, was now to be absorbed into the growing empire of Aceh, centred on the north-east coast. In west central Sumatra, the Minangkabau had freed themselves from the suzerainty of Majapait, and in the south, Palembang, once the centre of the empire of Śrī Vijaya, had become little more than a nest of Chinese pirates.

On Java, the period of Majapait's decline saw the growth of various small principalities, mostly on the north coast. Like Malacca, they were dependent more upon trade than upon agriculture, though the most important, Demak, controlled the rice-growing plains from Japara to Gresik. (Japara, its chief port, was later to become the headquarters of the Dutch East India Company for this area of Java.) In west Java, the sultanate of Banten was expanding its territory during the early years of the



The buffalo-drawn plough: a common sight in the ricefields of South-east Asia.

Portuguese settlement at Malacca, and in the 1520's it conquered the Hindu principality of Pajajaran, including a port called Sunda Kalapa, later Dutch Batavia and now Jakarta.

Of these principalities, the most important for the Portuguese in Malacca were Demak, Aceh, and Johore. During the following decades these three states and Malacca were linked in a perpetually shifting pattern of wars and alliances. The root cause of conflict was a clash of interest in the field of maritime trade. At this time the Javanese principalities had an active trade—their principal export was rice, for at that time Java produced a surplus of this staple, in contrast to the present situation when it must be imported. This rice was sold in the Moluccas in exchange for spices, especially cloves and nutmeg. At this time, people in Europe had to kill their cattle at the onset of winter for lack of winter fodder, and thus needed preservatives to ensure their meat supply. Of all the spices cloves are the most valuable as a preservative, but they occur naturally only in a few small islands in the Moluccas. The Portuguese made treaties with the local rulers there to obtain a monopoly, an attempt which was strongly opposed by the Javanese principalities. The Acehnese too had considerable trading interests, especially in gold and pepper from Sumatra and, in fact, succeeded in attracting quite an amount of trade away from Malacca.

The first attack on Malacca was led by the son of the first ruler of Demak in 1512 or 1513, and before the naval siege was raised Malacca was badly affected, many inhabitants dying of starvation. This first attack was followed by a series of attacks by Mahmud from Johore. These lasted from 1513 to 1528, when Mahmud died, and on several occasions reduced the city to the verge of famine. In 1533 there was another attack by Johore; then in 1537 Aceh entered the scene with a surprise attack. Aceh's growing wealth and empire made her feared and envied by the other principalities of the area, and in 1539 hostilities broke out between Aceh



and Johore, giving the Portuguese a breathing space. In 1547, the Acehnese launched another attack, which was beaten off. Then in 1551 a combined attack was launched by Johore, two other Malay sultanates (Perak and Pahang) and a certain 'princess of Japara'.

More Acehnese attacks followed between 1558 and 1575. In 1568, the Acehnese, who had links with the western part of the Muslim world, even had a force of 400 Turkish mercenaries, with 480 Turkish cannon. Relations between Aceh and Johore continued to be unstable, a situation the Portuguese were able to exploit. After the defeat of an attack by Johore in 1587 (when the Portuguese claimed to have captured 2000 ships of various sizes, 1000 pieces of small artillery and 1500 muskets) the capacity of these two principalities to threaten Malacca was largely spent.

It should perhaps be said that although the Portuguese were in a state of constant warfare with these principalities, and although they were convinced that they were bearers of the one true faith against the armies of Islām, they did not necessarily consider Asian civilization materially inferior. One of the earliest Portuguese books on the archipelago, published in 1510, was written by Ludovico di Varthema, who visited Pedir in north Sumatra. In his account of the port he said that eighteen or twenty ships took pepper to China every year, and that the region also produced immense quantities of silk and much benzoin. In one street alone there were 500 men who would change foreign monies, and stamped money of gold, silver, and tin was used locally. He praised the strict administration of justice, and mentioned the skill of the inhabitants in the various uses of gunpowder.

Left: Balinese brahman priest officiating at a ceremony; Right: an Ambonese boy with a ship made of cloves.





At the end of the 1580's, the Portuguese at Malacca were more secure from the attack of neighbouring powers than they had been for many decades. Just at this time, however, their position was threatened even more seriously by European enmities, which for the first time began to impinge upon this part of the world.

#### THE DUTCH ONSLAUGHT

In 1580, Portugal became part of the Spanish realm under Philip II. She was thus automatically brought into the war against the Dutch. The Netherlands had formerly been part of the Spanish empire, but had now risen in rebellion, claiming their independence. In 1594 Philip closed Lisbon to Dutch trade, an act which had far-reaching consequences for Portugal's Asian possessions, for the Dutch began to seek the valuable spices of the archipelago themselves. Quite a large number of Dutch expeditions were sent in the last years of the sixteenth century, and in 1602 the Dutch East India Company was founded. By 1610, the Dutch had achieved a dominant position in the Moluccas and Bandas.

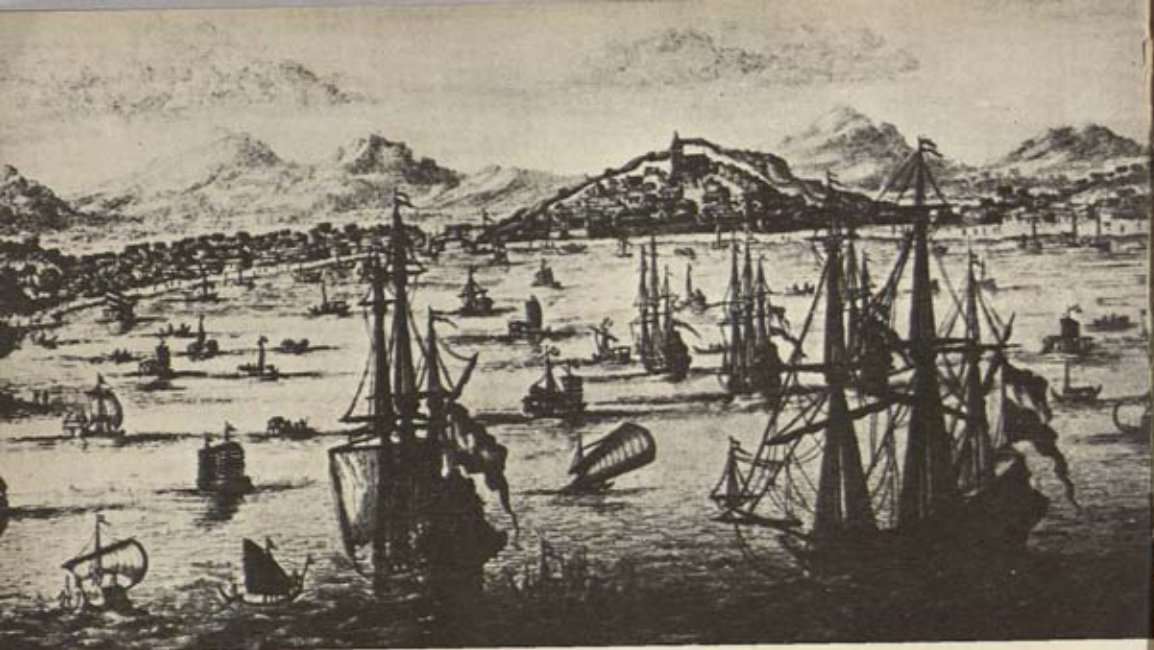
At this time the English, impressed by the profits to be made in the spice trade after Drake's voyage, were struggling to establish themselves in this part of the world. On the whole the Dutch were successful in their efforts to maintain the monopoly which would enable them to 'buy cheap and sell dear', although the English did have a factory (that is, a trading post) in Banten until 1684, when this Sultanate was conquered by the Dutch. At Makassar in Celebes too the English factory was the centre of a flourishing rival trade in spices until the Dutch conquest in 1668. But it was not until the nineteenth century that the English established themselves firmly in this region of the world.

#### THE RISE OF MATARAM AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DUTCH TERRITORIAL POWER ON JAVA

Early in the seventeenth century an inland agrarian state, situated like the eighth century kingdoms in central Java and bearing the old name of Mataram, came into existence and achieved a dominant position on the island. Under a strong ruler, Sultan Agung (1613-45) the kingdom's territory was enlarged by the conquest of many of the city-states of the north coast—Tuban in 1621, Gresik the following year, the island of Madura in 1624, and Surabaya in 1625. After these conquests one other north-coast settlement still remained to be subjugated. This was the Dutch post at Batavia.

Batavia had been founded by Jan Pieterszoon Coen, who became Governor-General of the Dutch factories and possessions in 1618. This port had formerly been called Sunda Kalapa, and is now Jakarta, the capital of the Republic of Indonesia. Coen himself was a man of considerable





View of Dutch Malacca.

force of personality, and his idea was to establish not a territorial empire but rather a network of Dutch trade posts which would catch the trade of the world in its mesh. During the seventeenth century the Dutch did establish this type of far-flung network, and their trade posts extended from the Bay of Bengal to Japan. By the end of the century, however, it was clear that this situation could not be maintained, for the various posts were too isolated and difficult to defend against attack.

This was the case in Java. Sultan Agung's two attacks on Batavia, in 1627 and 1629, were beaten off, but for some time the situation of the Dutch post was perilous. Coen himself died of cholera in the siege.

Under the Governor-Generalship of van Diemen (1636-45) the Dutch directed their energies towards driving out the Portuguese, whose trade prevented the Dutch from obtaining their desired monopoly. The blockade of Malacca had begun in 1633, and in 1641 the city fell. As a Dutch city, it was no longer the flourishing trade centre it had been under the Portuguese, for Batavia remained the centre of Dutch trade.

#### THE WARS OF SUCCESSION IN MATARAM AND THE DUTCH EAST INDIA COMPANY

When Sultan Agung died in 1645, the Dutch were no longer threatened by Mataram, and Batavia had a breathing space in which to build up her strength. By 1674, the power of the East India Company was already obvious enough for the ruler of Mataram (Amangkurat I) to ask its help when one of the princes of the realm rose in rebellion. The rebellion was defeated, but this episode was the first of a long series of internal wars



in Mataram through which the Dutch were able to obtain concessions in trade or territory as the price of their aid.

Seen as a whole, the eighteenth century was a time of great unrest in Java. A stubborn opponent of the Dutch was Surapati, in origin probably a Balinese slave, who had sided with the anti-Dutch party first at Banten and then at Mataram, and eventually established his own principality in east Java. He was killed in the Dutch attack on his capital in 1706, but his descendants and followers continued to fight the Dutch for the better part of the century. In Mataram, internal warfare continued to break out periodically until 1755 when, after the Third Javanese War of Succession, the Dutch divided the kingdom into two main parts. The eastern part was called Surakarta and the western part Jogjakarta, and both were now vassals of the Dutch East India Company.

By this time more than one-third of the island was under direct Dutch rule, and most of the remaining area was securely controlled. The Dutch East India Company had, however, other problems. The strict enforcement of its monopoly led to 'smuggling' (as the Company termed all private trade) not only by Indonesians, but also by its own underpaid employees. In 1722, 26 of these were beheaded for this offence, and in general the atmosphere in Batavia seems to have been extremely tense. In 1721 a certain Pieter Erberfelt was accused of plotting to raise an insurrection and murder all the Dutch in Batavia. Although the evidence against him was obtained under torture, he and others thought to be involved were put to death. Again, in 1740, nervousness about the growing Chinese population of the city led to a wholesale massacre, which in turn set off a serious anti-Dutch insurrection involving both Chinese and Javanese.

To maintain its profits—and its shareholders received very high dividends—the Dutch East India Company instituted a system of 'Contingencies and Forced Deliveries'. 'Contingencies' were a kind of tax or tribute paid in produce in areas outside direct Company control, and 'forced deliveries' meant that the cultivators were compelled to grow certain products and sell them to the Company at the price it chose to fix. Under Governor-General Zwaardecroon (1718-25) cotton, indigo, and coffee were introduced into Java. Coffee was to become the most profitable export crop of Java, remaining so until the 1860's.

At the end of the eighteenth century a combination of financial difficulties and the repercussions of European politics brought about the demise of the Dutch East India Company. The Netherlands became involved in a war with England from 1780 to 1784 which seriously affected the Company's trade. English power in this region was growing; in 1786 Francis Light founded a settlement on the island of Penang, off the west coast of Malaya, and during the 1790's, in reaction to the alliance between the new government of the Netherlands and revolutionary France, English forces captured Malacca, the Moluccas, and Padang in Sumatra from the Dutch. These possessions were returned in 1802, but by then the English



had transported clove and nutmeg seedlings to Penang and Ceylon, so that the Dutch East India Company was never able to re-establish its monopoly in the spice trade. The Company was finally dissolved on 31 December 1799 with a debt of 134 million guilders.

THE MALAYAN WORLD IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE SEVENTEENTH AND IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

During this period of Malayan history two of the peoples of the Archipelago played an important role, though in different ways. These were the Minangkabau of west central Sumatra, and the Buginese, a people from the south-west 'leg' of Celebes. Of the two groups, the Minangkabau were the first to arrive; an inscription of 1467 A.D. from the hinterland of Malacca is in the same script as that used in the Minangkabau homeland in Sumatra. This script is derived from the Old Javanese script, which is itself derived from an Indian one, and so we see the centuries-long diffusion of Indian influence from India itself to Java, thence to Sumatra and finally, more weakly, to Malaya. After about 1550, however, the Sumatran Minangkabaus were converted to Islām, and from this time the settlers in Malaya would have been mostly Muslim.

The Minangkabau colonists were for the most part engaged in agriculture, especially in wet-rice farming, and provided food for Malacca. They had also brought expertise in gold-mining from Sumatra, and some of them began to penetrate up the rivers into the Malayan interior. In Pahang there were sufficient deposits of gold for them to begin mining there.

During the time the Portuguese had held Malacca, the Minangkabau, though nominally under Portuguese suzerainty and enjoying a good trade with the city, had been more inclined to listen to their own chiefs, and after Malacca fell in 1641, the Dutch sometimes found their presence disturbing. In the 1670's a Minangkabau prince, Raja Ibrahim, united several of the Minangkabau colonies and then led an attack on Malacca which reached to within five miles of the city. In 1679, however, this prince was killed by a Buginese slave. This was the first blow in the struggle between the Minangkabau and the Buginese for dominance in this area.

This struggle was centred on the sultanate of Johore, which in the 1670's was in a state of decline, and had lost many of its former dependencies. During the rest of the seventeenth and the early part of the eighteenth century there was much plotting and counter-plotting among the chief families to put their candidates on the throne. In 1712 one of the periodic palace revolutions which weakened Johore was complicated by the appearance of a prince from the Minangkabau area of Sumatra. This prince, Raja Kecil, claimed to be the long-lost son of a former Johore sultan, and supported by a small force succeeded in establishing himself there.



His position was challenged by the Buginese, who after the Dutch conquest of their homeland in 1668 had begun to emigrate to other areas. Like the Minangkabau, they practised wet-rice cultivation but they were far more at home on the sea than their rivals. After their emigration from Celebes, they became famed throughout the archipelago for their fierceness and martial prowess. On the Malay Peninsula, they settled mainly in the area north of the Minangkabau settlements, in what is now the state of Selangor. Their bid for power in Johore was led by five famous brothers, of whom Daing Parani was the chief. Between 1718 and 1722 Raja Kecil fought them, but finally he was driven out of Johore, when the Buginese took over. The brothers did not themselves aspire to the title of Sultan—instead they installed a young member of one of the old families. However, the five of them held all the high offices of the sultanate, and effective power was in their hands.

But they were not greatly interested in Johore itself—they did nothing to arrest the break-up of the old empire—intending rather to use it as a base for extending their power over other areas of the peninsula. Raja Kecil, having lost in Johore, decided to fight elsewhere, and so the contest between Buginese and Minangkabau spread to two other Malay states, Kedah and Perak. In both cases the form of the contest was the same. In one of the dynastic struggles which were so frequent in the Malay sultanates, the Buginese took the part of one claimant, while Raja Kecil supported the other. In each case the Buginese emerged as the victors. In Selangor, most of the population was Buginese and a Buginese dynasty was later founded there, so that by 1745 the tin-rich states of the west coast (Kedah, Perak, and Selangor) were under Buginese control.

Tin was to be a continuing motif in Malayan history. After the Dutch had brought Mataram under control, they made a treaty with the Malay sultan of Johore, now restive under Buginese domination, whereby he gave them a monopoly of the tin trade. This inevitably led to war with the Buginese, the outcome of which was inconclusive. From 1760 to 1777 real power in Johore was held by the Buginese chief, Daing Kemboja, who held the office of *Yam Tuan Muda* or Under-King. He pursued a free trade policy at Riau, the Johore capital, welcoming other Europeans besides the Dutch. Thus he bought opium and other goods from the English and Portuguese in exchange for spices and, moreover, defied the treaties granting the Dutch a monopoly in tin. Chinese and Indian wares were also traded, and the existence of this free port seriously affected the trade of Malacca, which was on the decline throughout the eighteenth century.

Daing Kemboja was succeeded as Under-King by his nephew Raja Haji and during the period he held this office (1777-84) Riau was not only a thriving trade emporium but also an important centre of Islamic studies, visited by many Arab scholars. Relations with the Dutch remained strained, especially over the issue of the tin monopoly, and the situation eventually led to further warfare. Protracted hostilities disrupted Buginese



trade and exhausted their military capacity, so that by the end of the 1780's Buginese power in Malaya was virtually at an end, although they did continue to have some influence in Perak until 1826.

One consequence of the decline of Buginese power was the re-emergence of Minangkabau independence. For the greater part of the eighteenth century, the Minangkabau had been unable to appoint their own leaders to rule them and had had to accept Buginese rulers. During the period when the Buginese were losing to the Dutch, the Minangkabau settlements regained control of their own affairs, and towards the end of the century a number of them joined together in a larger confederation. These settlements formed the nucleus of the modern state of Negri Sembilan ('The Nine Settlements'). This state was essentially a fairly loose federation of different Minangkabau clans and, since election played a large part in the selection of its rulers, it developed a political structure more democratic than that of most of the Malayan sultanates.

#### THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

In the first two decades of the nineteenth century European events continued to impinge upon the Netherlands East Indies, as the Dutch possessions in Indonesia were called. When Napoleon's brother was made king of the Netherlands, he decided to fortify Java as part of the war strategy. In 1808 he sent Herman Daendels, the 'Iron Marshal', out to the colony, having granted him extraordinary powers. Daendels immedi-

A traditional Indonesian Qurān school.





ately set about strengthening the armed forces, building barracks, roads and fortresses, gun-foundries and military hospitals. Formerly the Dutch had governed Java indirectly, relying on the services of the old Javanese aristocracy in this respect. Daendels, in his urgent quest for efficiency, initiated a trend towards more direct rule, regarding the Javanese aristocrats as little more than subordinate civil servants. This was probably the beginning of the decline in the power and prestige of the aristocracy, a decline which was to accelerate towards the end of the century. Daendels' rather high-handed methods made many enemies among his fellow countrymen and he was eventually recalled. But it was the very success of the measures which he took to fortify Java which sealed the fate of Dutch rule there. The British were alarmed at these developments and, to prevent the French using Java as a base in the war, an expedition was sent, which captured Java in September 1811. Subsequently Thomas Stamford Raffles was made Lieutenant-General of the island.

Raffles has been rather differently regarded by English and Dutch historians. He was undoubtedly inspired by the humanitarian ideas of the age of Wilberforce, and severely limited the institution of slavery in Java, as well as putting an end to the use of torture in trials. His monumental *History of Java* testifies to his genuine interest in the civilization of the island. He was not, however, above taking his share of the booty when the English captured the Jogjakarta court.

The most important innovations he made during his governorship were in the field of economics and landholding. He abolished the 'Contingencies and Forced Deliveries' system, with the exception of the very profitable crops of teak and coffee. To replace the revenue earned by this system, he instituted a land-tax or land-rent scheme. He declared the government to be sole owner of all land, so that the cultivator had to pay a certain rent. This would be between one-quarter and one-half of the yield of the lands, the average being two-fifths. It could be paid in produce, but it could also be paid in money, which was an innovation, representing a change from the old 'tribute' idea to the more modern idea of a tax levied by the government to finance its services. However, the comprehensive land survey which was essential for the assessment of this land rent was only beginning at the time the scheme was put into practice and this affected its success. In 1815 Raffles was recalled, largely because of his failure to make the colony pay.

This was not the end of his South-east Asian career. His determination to maintain British power in the area—a zeal not always appreciated by his employers, the English East India Company—led him to found a British settlement on the island of Singapore in 1819. Singapore, like Penang, was a free port and this, coupled with its more favourable situation at the head of the Straits of Malacca, made it grow into the most booming emporium South-east Asia had known till that time.

In 1816 the British left Java altogether, and by the Anglo-Dutch



treaty of 1824 it was agreed that henceforth the British sphere of influence should be the Malay Peninsula (including the formerly Dutch city of Malacca) and Singapore, while the archipelago would be within the Dutch sphere.

The restored Dutch government in Batavia came back to face depressed economic conditions among the peasantry, a situation worsened by a slump in the market for coffee. The year 1825 saw the outbreak of the Java War, a serious uprising initiated by Prince Diponegoro, a fervent Muslim, and fanned by peasant discontent. The Dutch were not able to end the war until 1830 and spent millions of dollars in its course. To recoup their finances, Governor-General van den Bosch introduced what is usually referred to as the 'Culture System', a mistranslation of the Dutch for 'cultivation system'. In essence it was a return to the old 'Contingencies and Forced Deliveries' system, since the peasant was compelled to set aside part of his land—and perhaps more importantly, his time, sometimes more than half the year—for the cultivation of such crops as coffee, sugar, tea, tobacco, and indigo.

The system produced great quantities of marketable produce, and it has been estimated that the home finances of the Netherlands benefited to the extent of 900 million guilders during the period of the 'Culture System'. Whether the Javanese peasant benefited as much has been debated. The population of Java did increase during the period of the Culture System. However, it appears that at least in certain areas the cultivation of the staple food, rice, was neglected because of the government's demand for export crops, and there were serious famines in the 1840's. After this time, Dutch private enterprise began to campaign against the government's monopoly of agricultural production in Java, and painted the abuses of the Culture System in the darkest colours. The liberals, the spokesmen for these interests, did eventually succeed in obtaining a larger part for private enterprise in plantations, coal-mining and later oil, and the period after 1870 is often called the 'Liberal Era'. The government's forced cultivation was gradually abolished for the various crops, though coffee was grown under this system until 1917.

The second half of the nineteenth century was a period of increased technological development in the colony; the first inland telegraphic service was opened in 1856, and the inland postal service began functioning in 1866. The first railway lines were completed in the 1870's. In the field of industry, however, there was relatively little development, and native industry scarcely existed at all.

This was also a period of territorial expansion. Whereas formerly only Java and the Moluccas had been directly governed, with the rest of Indonesia—the 'Outer Islands', as it was sometimes called—left largely to its own devices as long as peace was kept and the treaties with the Dutch government were observed, an effort was now made to enlarge the sphere of direct rule. In part this was due to fear of British ambitions, especially



in the case of Borneo where James Brooke became Raja of Sarawak in 1841. Soon afterwards the Dutch brought large areas of Borneo and Sumatra under direct administration, and annexed territory in northern Bali. The southern part of this island, which never accepted Islām and remains today the last outpost of Hindu-Buddhist culture, was not subjugated until 1908 after one of the most valiantly hopeless defences of the colonial era.

By far the toughest nut to crack, however, was the sultanate of Aceh. Here again the Dutch were afraid of losing the area to the British and a complicated situation developed. Aceh was then, as now, one of the most strongly Muslim areas of the Archipelago and there was thus a strong religious motivation in resistance to Dutch conquest. The war, which began in 1873, dragged on without any apparent prospect of success for the Dutch armies. In 1892 the Dutch government decided to ask the advice of C. C. Snouck Hurgronje, a brilliant Islamologist who had already spent some time in Mecca and observed the colony of Indonesian Muslims there. He advised the government to make a separation between the 'religious' and 'political' spheres, guaranteeing freedom of religion to the mass of the people while quelling with force any political opposition by Muslim 'fanatics'. The combination of this policy and greatly improved military techniques brought about the end of the Aceh War in 1908.

By this time, therefore, nearly all of the area of modern Indonesia was under direct Dutch rule. This had far-reaching consequences: the younger generation in the different regional societies—Javanese, Acehnese, Balinese, or Minangkabau as the case may be—now had a basis of common experience in the fact of Dutch rule, and by the 1920's the new idea of a united 'Indonesia', descended from the Netherlands East Indies, had come into existence. Secondly, the greater penetration of Dutch rule into village society led to an increase in discontent, for the Dutch government, once remote, was now much more closely involved with the day-to-day life of the peasant.

#### THE MAKING OF MODERN MALAYA

In 1850, the three British settlements in the Malayan world, Penang, Malacca, and Singapore (known collectively as the Straits Settlements) had been in existence for some decades. In the second half of the century, the merchants and financiers of these settlements began to be increasingly interested in the peninsula itself, and this interest centred largely on tin-mining. This was not a new activity in Malaya, having been one of the chief staples of the empire established on the peninsula by the Buginese in the eighteenth century. In the 1850's and 1860's, however, there was a sort of 'tin rush', involving a lot of British capital from the Straits Settlements and, for labour, increasingly large numbers of Chinese immigrants. This influx imposed severe strains on the administrations of the small





Malay house-boats on the Perak River.

Sultan Idris of Perak (1887-1916) and retinue.



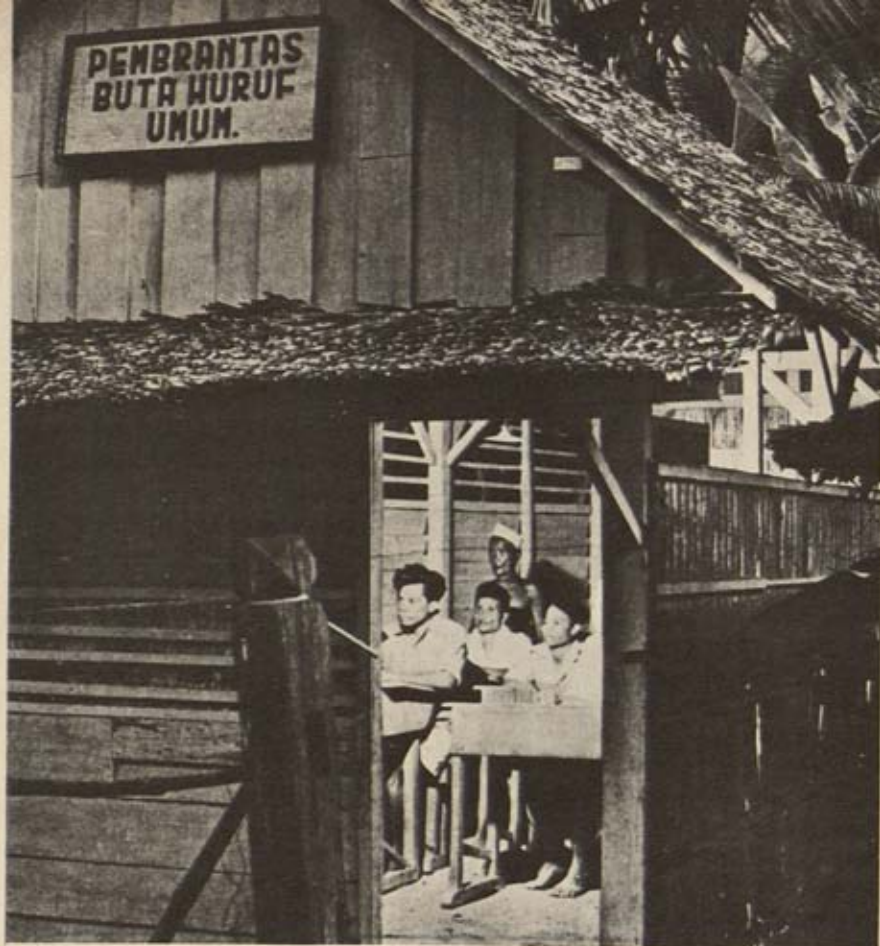


Malay sultanates of the west coast where the tin deposits were found. The problem was worsened by succession disputes in the Malay royal families, and by the existence of rival secret societies among the Chinese, leading to pitched battles over possession of the valuable mines. The breakdown of law and order led to agitation by the Straits Settlement financiers with the object of persuading the British government to intervene in order to protect British interests. It was not until late in 1873, when a new Governor of the Straits Settlements was appointed, that the government was persuaded to take action.

The sultanate of Perak was at the time in the throes of a succession dispute, and Chinese secret societies were fighting for the Larut mines. The Pangkor Engagement, signed in January 1874, was the first result of British intervention and the model for all subsequent cases. Besides recognizing one of the rival claimants to the throne, it provided for the installation at the Perak court of a British officer called a Resident, 'whose advice must be asked and acted upon on all questions other than those touching Malay religion and custom'. Treaties of the same sort were later concluded with the states of Selangor, Negri Sembilan (the state largely settled by Minangkabau immigrants from Sumatra) and Pahang. In 1895, these four states were federated for greater administrative convenience, and were henceforth known as the Federated Malay States. Between 1909 and 1914, the British gained control over the remaining Malay states—Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan, Trengganu, and Johore—which accepted 'Advisers' similar to the Residents of the earlier treaties. These five states were unwilling to join a federation, and were hence known as the Unfederated Malay States. Despite the legal division into three categories—Straits Settlements, Federated Malay States and Unfederated Malay States—the British presence did introduce a greater degree of uniformity in many fields than had ever existed before.

The period between 1874 and the First World War was one of tremendous change in Malaya. The exploitation of the economic potential of the peninsula began, and a booming export economy developed. The bases of this economy were chiefly tin and rubber, both of which were largely dependent upon immigrant labour—Chinese in the case of the tin mines, mostly Indian on the rubber plantations. This introduced divisions into Malayan society, due not merely to racial differences but also to the British policy of disturbing traditional Malay society as little as possible. With this object, they introduced measures designed to keep the Malay peasant on the land, engaged in rice production and protected from the need to compete in modern economic situations. Legislation was introduced to prevent large amounts of Malay land being sold to non-Malays. The result was that the Malays by and large remained a rural community, with little part in urban life or in the economic life of the country, which was dominated by the Chinese. Such a division contained seeds of conflict which were to bear fruit later. Meanwhile technological modernization proceeded





School for adults in Borneo, part of the campaign against illiteracy.

at a rapid rate, with the development of roads, railways, communications, and modern services transforming the face of the peninsula.

#### THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS

*Indonesia.* The beginning of the twentieth century saw the introduction of a new colonial policy in the Netherlands East Indies, the so-called Ethical Policy. This laid emphasis on improving native welfare, and instituted a many-sided programme to provide rural credit banks, clinics, crop improvement, instruction in modern methods of agriculture and animal husbandry, as well as improved irrigation and road works. Another aspect of the Ethical Policy was a belief in the necessity for increased decentralization of government. Village councils were set up to train Indonesians in the processes of democracy, and these became the basis of a pyramid of councils representing larger and larger regions, culminating in the 'Volksraad' or People's Council, a national body founded in 1918. This body had advisory powers only, however, so that many of its members



came to feel that they were engaged in play-acting rather than in the serious business of representative government.

The Ethical Policy also laid great stress on making education more widely available. A much larger number of natives—usually from the traditional élite—now received Dutch-language education, a privilege the Dutch had formerly been reluctant to grant. One outstanding figure deeply affected by this development was Kartini, the daughter of a progressive Javanese aristocrat who allowed her to attend a Dutch primary school. We know a great deal about her from a long series of vivid letters written to her Dutch friends, subsequently published and translated into several languages. After this experience Kartini was no longer satisfied with the narrow and secluded life which tradition prescribed for a young lady of high birth, and felt a burning desire to undertake a career such as teaching or nursing which would contribute to the welfare of her people. At the same time, however, she was aware of the materialism and arrogance of parts of western society, especially in the colonial situation. Her life was not without inner conflict, and was cut tragically short soon after her marriage to a man who shared her ideals and was willing to help in their fulfilment.

One of the founders of the Ethical Policy had spoken of the creation of a society 'which is indebted to the Netherlands for its prosperity and higher culture and thankfully recognizes this fact'. This ideal was never realized. The welfare programme was severely hampered by the opposition of private enterprise whose profits were threatened. The colonial administration too, was not willing to open up its higher ranks to those Indonesians who were now educated to this level, a situation which bred bitterness and disappointment, leading to vociferous criticism. This in its turn led opponents of the Ethical Policy to claim that it had proceeded too fast and had disrupted native society. In fact, it may be truer to say that it had proceeded too slowly, lagging behind the demand for change. After some minor local rebellions in 1919, the Ethical Policy gradually died a quiet death.

By that time the first manifestations of a national consciousness had already appeared. After one or two associations or political parties with a fairly limited impact, an organization with a mass following emerged. This was the Sarekat Islam or Islamic Union, founded in 1912. However, it would be wrong to assume that all its members—of whom there were more than two million in 1919—were particularly fervent Muslims. In a period when the idea of a common Indonesian nationality had not yet emerged from the different regional groups, to say 'I am a Muslim' was a way of defining an identity distinctly different from that of the Dutch or of the large Chinese community which dominated areas of the economy. Furthermore, many people joined because Sarekat Islam was the one channel open to them to air grievances of a purely local character.

Later, various forms of socialism and Marxism began to attract a





The boat quay at Singapore, early 20th century.

following in Indonesia, even within the Sarekat Islam itself. In 1920, the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI, Indonesian Communist Party) was formed, and in 1926 local PKI branches led revolts in the western parts of Java and Sumatra. These were easily suppressed, but stirred the government to strong action, so that 13 000 people considered politically dangerous for one reason or another were arrested.

By 1927, opposition to colonial government seemed to have been completely suppressed. But it was this year which saw the sudden appearance of a movement which was to be more influential than either the Sarekat Islam or the PKI. This was the Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI, Indonesian National Party) founded by a small group led by the engineer Sukarno. This party played a considerable rôle in the formation of a secular Indonesian identity, which was defined in a Youth Congress of October 1928 as 'one nation—Indonesia—one people—the Indonesian people—one language—the Indonesian language'. This emphasis on the need for one language—Bahasa Indonesia, based on Malay, which is spoken by only a minority of Indonesians as their mother tongue—is an indication of the awareness among the delegates of the tremendous problem of regional differences. This is a problem which has continued to bedevil independent Indonesia, and which is compounded by differing religious attitudes. In some areas, such as Aceh and west Java, there have been movements to set up an Islamic state, an ideal not nearly as popular in regions like central Java.

The 1930's were years of strict government repression of political activities; it was an offence even to use the word 'independence'. Because of this nothing had been settled about the ultimate relationship between the Netherlands and its colony when the Japanese landed in March 1942.

The Japanese occupation was undoubtedly a period of hardship, suffering, and dislocation in Indonesia, but at the same time it opened up possibilities which had never existed before. While Dutch colonial policy in the 1930's had been to keep political activity virtually non-existent by the exile of influential figures, the Japanese, on the other hand, aimed at making use of the influence of the Indonesian Nationalist leaders to assist their war effort. Because of this policy Sukarno and other leaders received organizational assistance and facilities to communicate with the masses which they had never had before.

On 17 August 1945, just before the defeat of the Japanese, Sukarno and his colleague Dr Mohammed Hatta proclaimed the independence of Indonesia. The Netherlands, however, did not accept this declaration, expecting to resume the government of the colony after the defeat of the Japanese invaders, and Dutch troops returned to Indonesia. Various 'police actions' against the newly-proclaimed republic were undertaken, and although the Dutch had insufficient troops at first, it eventually became clear that the nationalist leaders' military apparatus was losing the fight. However, the stubborn guerrilla warfare waged by certain sections of the population, and the pressure of international opinion, had their effect. After long negotiations, the official transfer of sovereignty took place on December 27 1949, and the Republic of Indonesia became a sovereign nation.

*Malaya.* In contrast to Indonesia, the Malayan scene remained relatively quiet before the Japanese occupation. There were several reasons for this,



The bullock cart is used throughout Indonesia and Malaysia. This model is from the neighbourhood of Malacca.



including the comparatively short period of British rule and the British policy of maintaining the position (if not the real power) of the Malay sultans and isolating the Malay peasant from the uncomfortable pressures of the modern world. In the case of the Chinese and Indians it often happened that the earliest generations of immigrants did not regard Malaya as their permanent home, and remained more interested in developments in their mother country. There were, however, some organizations of a political nature, such as the Malay Associations. These were formed by members of the traditional aristocracy who had received an English education, and who were concerned that their fellow Malays had virtually no control over the economic and political life of their country. The Malay Associations were not national, for they were based on the different Malay states, and may be called communal in nature since they were constantly aware of the threat represented by the immigrant communities, whose combined numbers were now overtaking those of the Malays themselves.

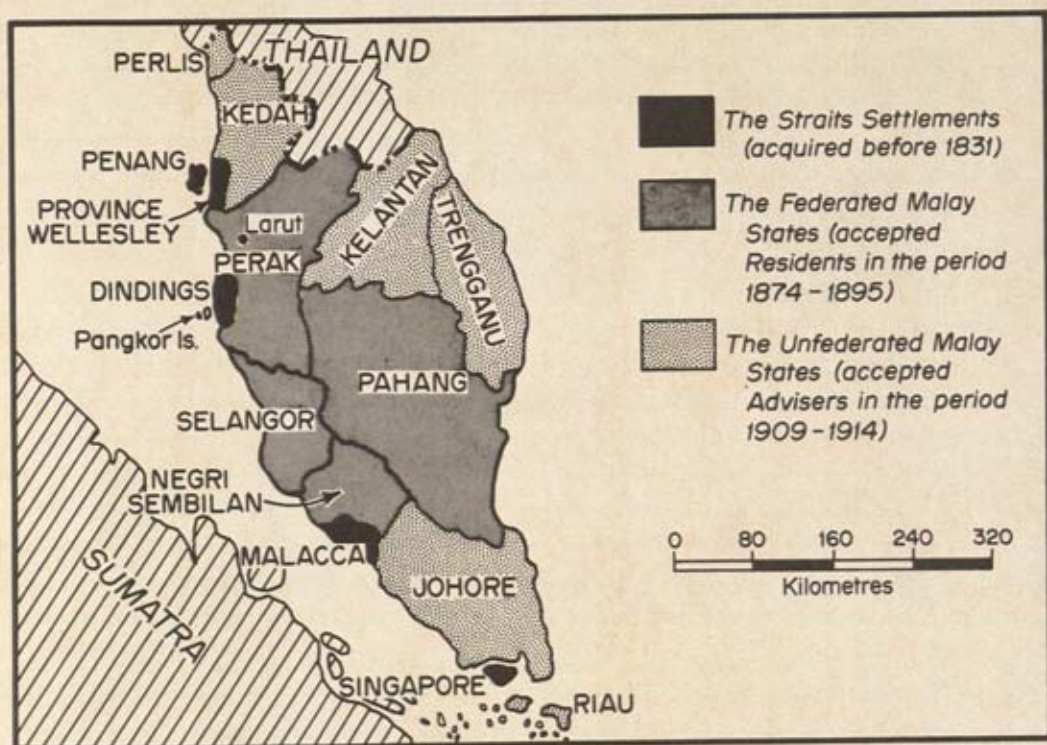
Communal tensions were worsened by the Japanese occupation. The Japanese put to death large numbers of Chinese for their support of China's war effort against Japan, and guerrilla resistance to the occupation was largely a Chinese effort. The Japanese did not persecute the Malays in the same manner, but all races suffered considerably from food shortages and the general dislocation of war. In contrast to Indonesia, there was some measure of relief in Malaya at the prospect of the return of their earlier colonial masters.



Parliament House, Kuala Lumpur.

The shape of the modern Malaysian nation was worked out after the war in co-operation with the colonial government. Whereas this period in Indonesia saw an increase in the problem of containing regional loyalty within a united nation, with breakaway movements in, for instance, Aceh and the Moluccas, in Malaya there was some growth of national solidarity among the Malays. The Malayan situation was different in that the Malays of the various states had much more common ground—for example, all speak the Malay language—than the diverse linguistic and cultural groupings of Indonesia. Nor was there the problem of one group like the Javanese who had achieved a dominant position often resented by outsiders. Finally the presence of the alien immigrant communities formed a powerful inducement to Malay solidarity. The central demands of the Malay and Chinese communities were a greater share of the economic life of the country as far as the Malays were concerned, and admission to the franchise and the business of government in the case of the Chinese.

The process of working out this adjustment was impeded by the outbreak of the rebellion generally known as the 'Emergency', in 1948. The Malayan Communist Party, frustrated in its trade union work by repressive



The formation of British Malaya.



legislation, decided to turn to armed insurrection, with the aim of disrupting the economy and overthrowing the colonial government. However, the fact that most of the rebels were Chinese meant that Malays were suspicious of the attempt, and even among the Chinese only a minority were involved. By the use of intelligent strategy, the British government was able to get the situation under control by the mid-1950's.

This situation made it clear to the non-Communist leaders of the two communities that it was imperative for them to co-operate in the achievement of an independent nation. In 1953, the National Alliance, representing the more conservative leadership of both Chinese and Malays, was set up, and in 1954 the Malayan Indian Congress also joined the Alliance, which thus represented all three communities. This union proved overwhelmingly successful in elections, and eventually its leaders worked out a set of proposals for an independent Malaya embodying compromises by each of the communities. These were accepted by the British, and on August 31 1957 the independent Federation of Malaya came into being.

The island colony of Singapore proceeded more slowly towards independence, and it was not until 1957 that the British gave a firm undertaking. Then, in 1961, Tengku Abdul Rahman of Malaya proposed the federation of Malaya with Singapore and the three remaining British territories in Borneo—Sarawak, Sabah, and Brunei. This new state came into being in September 1963, and was called Malaysia. Brunei, however, decided not to join, and Malaysia was further diminished in August 1965 when the Malayan leaders asked Singapore, an overwhelmingly Chinese island, to leave the Federation, an indication that a stable communal balance had not yet been achieved in the Malaysian region. Singapore was henceforth an independent island republic, and the present-day political structure of this part of South-east Asia was fixed at this time.

## NOTES ON THE PRONUNCIATION OF MALAY AND JAVANESE NAMES

In the early and medieval periods, many proper names (e.g. Śrī Vijaya) are in fact Sanskrit, and for the pronunciation of these see the notes on Sanskrit names. As with Sanskrit, Javanese has both a lingual and a dental *t* and *d* (ṭ, ṭ and ḍ, ḍ).

Names from the later period are spelt according to the common spelling system which has now been adopted in Indonesia and Malaysia. It does not present too many difficulties for English speakers, but the following remarks may be helpful. The vowel *a* is usually more like the vowel of 'but' than like most English *a*'s; the vowel *i* approximates most nearly to the *ee* sound of 'teeth'; and the vowel *u* is like the *u* of 'push'. It should be noted that there are no diphthongs. Where two vowels occur together they are pronounced separately, thus Kuala (Lumpur) = Ku-a-la (three syllables) and Indonesia = strictly speaking, In-do-ne-si-a (five syllables).

One particular usage which should be noted is the use of the letter *c* to represent the sound corresponding to English *ch*. Thus Aceh is pronounced 'Acheh', and is sometimes spelt thus by English writers. The spelling 'Atjeh' is also found, representing a Dutch convention (*tj* = English *ch*). Two other Dutch conventions which are sometimes found are *dj* in place of *j* (e.g. in Djakarta, now spelt Jakarta) and *oe* in place of *u* (thus Soekarno instead of Sukarno). Finally, the English *sh* corresponds to the *sy* of the new spelling system.



## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

In the experience of the author of the above chapter, many students without any knowledge of the languages of this region are quite severely hampered in their study of its history by difficulties with unfamiliar personal and other names, especially perhaps those derived from Sanskrit. For this reason a consistent effort has been made to reduce these to a minimum, but this has of course entailed the omission of most of the closer-focus material that makes the study of history more interesting. It is hoped that use of the books listed below (a very small selection of those available in this field) will remedy this deficiency.

- Bastin, John, and Benda, Harry J., *A History of Modern Southeast Asia*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1968.
- Coedès, G., *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, A.N.U. Press, Canberra (1st English ed.) 1968.
- Fisher, Charles, A., *South-east Asia: A Social, Economic and Political Geography*, Methuen, London (2nd ed) 1966.
- Hall, D. G. E., *A History of South-east Asia*, Macmillan, London (3rd ed.) 1968.
- Kilgour, Anne, *Bapak Sutapa—A Farmer in Java*, Graphic Educational Publications, Auckland, n.d.
- Legge, J. D., *Indonesia*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1964.
- McVey, Ruth T. (ed.) *Indonesia*, HRAF Press, New Haven, 1963.
- Moorhead, F. J., *A History of Malaya and her Neighbours* (2 vols) Longmans of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur (1st ed.) 1957 and 1963.
- Steinberg, David Joel (ed.) *In Search of Southeast Asia: A Modern History*, Praeger, New York/London, 1971.

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# China and Korea

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K.H.J. GARDINER





## THE GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

It has been said that China is shaped like a begonia leaf. The Gulf of Pohai, between the Shantung and Liaotung Peninsulas, represents the central point where the leaf joins the stem, while the southward curve of the Chinese coast, from Shan-tung towards Vietnam, represents the curve of the leaf's lower lobe. The tip of the leaf is the extension of China towards Central Asia, while the veins are the great rivers, generally flowing west to east, in particular the Yellow River which flows right across northern China and into the Gulf of Pohai. There are other rivers too which cut right across the country, such as the Yangtze, traditionally the boundary between north and south China, and even further south the Hsi-chiang, flowing into the South China Sea at Canton.

Whereas the rivers flow from west to east, the major mountain ranges in China tend to run north and south. In the west they block easy access from the rest of China to the great provinces of Szuchuan and Yünnan; in the south-east they shut off the coastal province of Fukien. Rivers and mountains together divide the country into certain clearly defined areas which correspond roughly to the modern provinces. From time to time throughout Chinese history, strong governments have been able to impose their control over the entire country. But over such a vast territory embracing so many naturally diverse regions, weakness in the central government has often meant that the country fell apart into a number of contending states whose boundaries approximated those of the modern provinces. This rhythm of unity and disunity is perceptible throughout Chinese history.

China enjoys a monsoon climate, which means that it receives most of its rainfall during a relatively restricted period in the warmer part of the year. Since by far the greater part of the country, including the deserts of the north and the mountain gorges of the west, is unsuitable for agriculture, this has meant in practice that it has always been important to make the best possible use of whatever land or water was available. Thus intensive rather than extensive agriculture has been the rule in China. Seeking to make the best possible use of the land, the Chinese have terraced their hillsides in order to grow crops on the slopes; seeking to maximize





The terraced gullied landscape of loessland.

their use of the rainfall, they have turned to the construction of ditches and irrigation works from the earliest times. One of the most celebrated of ancient Chinese culture heroes was Yü the Great, who was believed to have dug out the courses of many of the major rivers, and to have constructed channels which drained off the waters of a great flood.

The importance of irrigation in the history of China is also seen in other ways. In early times the centre of Chinese civilization lay in the Yellow River Valley, and in the time of Confucius, in the sixth century B.C., the states of the Yangtze Valley were regarded as semi-barbarous and very much part of the outback. But in the four hundred years from 189 to 589 A.D., northern China was the scene of almost constant civil war, and was also subject to frequent devastation by the nomadic peoples from the steppe. The warlords and petty princes of these centuries paid more attention to building up their armies than to keeping the irrigation works in repair, with the result that large areas passed out of cultivation

while, as a result of the unsettled conditions, the peasants migrated to southern China in ever increasing numbers. In this way, from the seventh century onwards, the Yangtze Valley came more and more to be regarded as the economic centre of China, and the population of southern China soon outpaced that of the north. Even today such important centres as Sian, in the Wei Valley, close to the site of the ancient capital of Ch'ang-an, are surrounded by miles of arid scrub.

Intensive rather than extensive is a characteristic which applies both to the early agriculture of northern China, based upon millet, and to the later rice culture of southern China. In both cases, during the growing season it is important that everyone who is able to do so should work on the land. This helps to explain the emphasis on large families and on family solidarity which is a well-known feature of Chinese culture; a family which becomes too small may lose the ability to farm its own land to the best advantage. Later institutions grew up on this basis. Thus, the family was commonly treated as a unit for taxation purposes, while in law the family as a whole was generally held responsible for the actions of its individual members and, at both the top and the bottom of the social scale, a serious misdemeanour committed by one man might involve a considerable reduction in status for his entire family. The supreme importance of the family rather than the individual is also reflected in the widespread occurrence of ancestor worship, which made the family not merely a social unit but also a religious centre.

These remarks apply more particularly to what may be regarded as the heartland of Chinese culture, the valleys of the great river systems, and the North China Plain. But, as already indicated, the present boundaries of the People's Republic of China include vast areas where, until the latest developments in agricultural science, sedentary agriculture was scarcely possible at all, especially in the lands north and north-east of the Yellow River. Whereas the far south is an area into which Chinese-style intensive agriculture and the culture pattern based upon it could be extended—from Canton down into the Red River delta and so on into Vietnam and South-east Asia—the north on the other hand offered little other than huge tracts of barren steppeland, where it seemed that only pastoralists could thrive. And even pastoralists could only wrest a living from the steppe by keeping their flocks and herds mobile. Ever present was the danger that overgrazing might turn a given stretch of country from steppe to actual desert; thus, from at least as early as the fourth century B.C., the herdsmen of the far north took to a nomadic way of life. Struggling against a harsh environment, they developed strong tribal loyalties, but never the close identification between family and land which was so characteristic of Chinese society proper. Their society was in many ways the antithesis of Chinese society, putting a premium on mobility just as Chinese society placed a premium upon immobility.



Naturally enough, although there were broad areas suited to pastoral nomadism, and other broad areas where sedentary agriculture could be practised, there were also considerable tracts—such as the North China Plain—which could be utilized for either purpose—for the pasturing of sheep and cattle, or the growing of millet. Since the two methods of land use were mutually exclusive, friction with the nomads quickly developed as soon as Chinese settlement extended into this debatable land, and thus arose what one celebrated historian has called 'the frontier style' of Chinese history.<sup>1</sup> When strong centralized governments controlled the Yellow River Valley and the North China Plain, they sought to extend their influence into the steppe, and check nomadic incursions by reducing the northern tribes to vassalage. Sometimes they tried to 'freeze' the frontier, to give it a



Part of the Great Wall of China.

definitive shape by erecting enormous fortification works such as the Great Wall, originally constructed by the men of the states of Ch'in, Wei, and Chao in the fourth and third centuries B.C.

But even fortifications such as the Great Wall, so huge that it has been estimated that this would be the only work of man's hands on the earth's surface to be visible to the naked eye of an observer on the moon,

<sup>1</sup> Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China*, Beacon Press, Boston (reprint), 1962, pp. 407-25.

are only as strong as the army that defends them. When weak governments succeeded, or the frontier armies were withdrawn to take part in civil wars, the nomad cavalry swept in to pasture their horses in the North China Plain. In the fourth century A.D., during the period of civil wars, they overran all China up to the Yangtze; in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries they constantly harassed the Chinese rulers of the Sung dynasty, and eventually forced them too to take shelter south of the Yangtze; while in the thirteenth century the Mongols of Khubilai Khan overran the whole country, and for the first time a northern nomad reigned as emperor over the whole of China.

Compared with the dominating importance of the northern frontier, the Chinese frontier to the west and the sea coast to the east have on the whole played only minor rôles in Chinese history. Towards the west, the mountain ranges become higher and higher as they ascend towards the cold plateau of Tibet. Whatever its present status, this area has traditionally been far less exposed to Chinese cultural influence than has either Korea to the north-east, or Vietnam to the south, largely because it is forbidding and inhospitable, as well as being shut off from China by some of the most difficult country in the world. More importantly, the Tibetan Plateau and the mountain barriers sealed China off almost completely from any cultural contact with Indian civilization. What contact did occur—such as the introduction of Buddhism into China at the beginning of the Christian era—took place mainly via the Central Asian Silk Route, or via the sea route round South-east Asia and up to Vietnam and the ports of southern China. As regards the eastern seaboard itself, it certainly became important in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with the rise of Japanese pirates, and even more so in the nineteenth century, when its ports provided the lanes by which the western powers extended their trade and influence over the whole of China. But as to its importance in earlier periods we are singularly ill-informed, perhaps because the traditional histories of China were in general written by scholars and officials who regarded the merchant and the sailor as members of society to be despised.

Outside China proper, near enough to China to come under considerable cultural influence, but far enough away to escape Chinese political control throughout much of their history, were the two neighbouring areas of Central Asia in the north-west, and Korea in the north-east. Central Asia is a land of desert and oases. In the oases settled agriculture is possible; outside them even pastoral nomadism is hardly possible. Thus at the beginning of their history the oasis towns such as Khotan, Kashgar or Yarkand developed as little communities of farmers. But with the growth of world empires at opposite ends of Central Asia in the last two centuries B.C.—Rome and Parthia in the west, and Han China in the east—it became possible for the inhabitants of these towns to make a profitable living transporting the goods of one empire to the inhabitants of the other. The farming communities gradually turned into caravan cities, and from



the latter part of the second century B.C. onwards the famous Silk Route grew up, along which caravans brought Chinese silk into the west, where it was greatly esteemed as a luxury by the Romans, and in return conveyed Roman gold eastwards to China.

But the existence of this lucrative traffic tempted the great powers to try to control it. Han China sent one army after another into Central Asia, while in the west first Rome and Parthia, and later Byzantium and Persia,



Detail from a mural in a Koguryŏ tomb at T'ung-kou in Manchuria. Early 5th century A.D. Han, Chinese and Central Asian styles are combined in this chase through stylised landscape. The figure on horseback, shooting over his shoulder, is the famous Western motif of the Parthian horseman.

competed for control over the eastern outlets of the Silk Route. Indian influence from the south was also strong, and Buddhism reached this area long before it arrived in China proper. The fact that Central Asia functioned as a 'corridor' of trade and culture naturally exposed it to a wide range of influences, so that the cultural domination of China in the area was never complete, and indeed suffered a serious setback in 751 when

the Arabs, who had already gained control over the westernmost cities of the Silk Route such as Samarkand, overwhelmingly defeated the Chinese in the Battle of the Talas River. From this time onwards Islamic culture was to predominate in this part of the world, even though the rulers of China later brought eastern Central Asia under their political control.

Korea had rather a different history. Here there were comparatively large areas where settled agriculture was possible, such as the coastal plain of western Korea and the valleys of the Ch'ong-ch'ôn, Tae-dong, Han, and Kûm Rivers. Strongly individualized local cultures developed in these regions at a very early period, but already from the fourth century B.C. they began to fall under the influence of the states of northern China. As the clash between the Chinese and the northern nomads developed, both sides saw Korea as a strategically desirable area, and the Han Chinese moved forward to establish a provincial administration in the peninsula in 108 B.C. Their hold on Korea lasted for over four hundred years, about as long as the comparable Roman occupation of Britain, but naturally it could not survive the loss of northern China itself to the nomads at the beginning of the fourth century A.D. The Chinese settlers isolated in Korea became advisers to Korean princes, and such was the prestige of the Chinese imperial system that the cultural influence of China over the new Korean states, and even over Japan further to the east, was continued and even strengthened. In this connection it should be remembered that Korea and Japan, unlike Central Asia, were not open to direct influence from any major cultural centre other than China.

The rise of the Yamato state in Japan from the fifth century onwards gave Korea an added importance as an intermediary between that country and China, and by the T'ang period—from the seventh to the tenth centuries—most of the seagoing trade between China and the countries further east was in Korean hands. However, its proximity to the lands of the northern nomads continued to expose Korea to the hazards of the long struggle between these peoples and the Chinese. The Chinese themselves repeatedly invaded Korea in the seventh century, while in the thirteenth and again in the seventeenth century, the peninsula was devastated by invasions from the northern peoples, first the Mongols and later the Manchus.

#### THE EARLIEST CULTURES

It is not difficult to see why Chinese culture developed first in the Yellow River Valley and in the North China Plain, which is watered by the lower course of this river. Much of this region possesses rich deposits of a wind-blown soil known as *loess*, probably carried by winds from Central Asia at some time between the fourth and the final Ice Ages. *Loess* is a fertile soil and easy to work, but since the rainfall in north China was rather light, it did not support large forests. This meant that there was no need



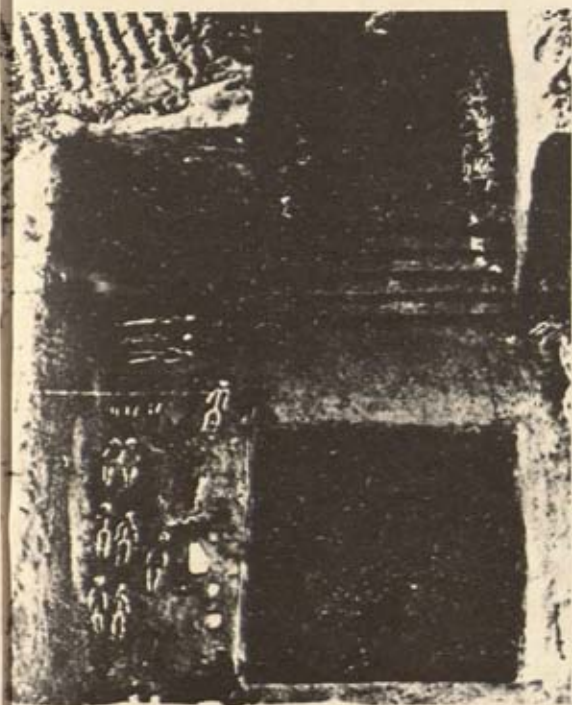
to make extensive clearings before planting crops, and thus in this part of the country it was comparatively easy for people to make the transition to an agricultural economy with fairly primitive tools. However, the limited rainfall also meant, as already noticed, that at an early stage the farmers of the Yellow River Valley had to learn to co-operate with each other in order to build and maintain sizeable irrigation works, which in turn led to the development of larger and more highly organized communities.

Naturally these developments took many thousands of years. The earliest human remains in China, those of so-called Peking Man, go back more than 400 000 years, but it is only about 2500 B.C. that the earliest communities of farmers in the Yellow River Valley began to construct irrigation ditches, plant millet, and make coarse painted pottery. These were the Yang Shao people, whose settlements are found round about the eastern edge of the northern Chinese highlands. Further east, in the North China Plain itself, arose the Lung-shan culture. Lung-shan, like Yang Shao, is a place-name; it means 'Dragon Mountain'. Like the Yang Shao people, the Lung-shan farmers grew millet, and kept certain domestic animals, including the dog, pig, sheep, goat and horse—although it is not clear whether they rode the horse or merely kept it for food! Their pottery, unlike that of Yang Shao, was thin and black. Some of the Lung-shan settlements were surrounded with earthen ramparts; this suggests that the peoples of this remote period were already beginning to fight amongst themselves, since to keep out wild beasts wooden palisades would have been sufficient.

The Chinese of Yang Shao and Lung-shan times were ignorant of the art of writing, so their history is unknown. Later generations tried to explain the advances made in primitive times as due to the genius of a few great leaders and heroes. Thus they told stories of Shen-nung 'The Divine Farmer', who first taught men how to plant crops; of the Yellow Emperor, who started the first markets where people could exchange goods; and of the Emperor Yao who, after ruling long and wisely, was so virtuous that he gave the throne to an equally wise commoner named Shun, instead of transmitting it to his own son whom he knew to be worthless. It was in Yao's reign, we are told, that a tremendous flood took place from which the hero Yü the Great, mentioned earlier, saved the world. We also hear of a terrible drought caused by ten suns which appeared together in the sky; Yi the Archer shot down nine of the suns, and again the world was saved.

The people who first told these stories probably had no idea of how long ago the heroes lived (if indeed they are not completely imaginary) nor of whether they all lived at the same time, or one after another, or in what order. Much later again, after China had been unified into a single country, historians came to believe that so many outstanding rulers could not all have lived at the same time, so they made them successive emperors of the whole of China, thereby distorting the original stories. Shen-nung

became one of a group of rulers called 'The Three Sovereigns'; the Yellow Emperor became the first of the 'Five Emperors', who succeeded the Three Sovereigns, the last two of the Five Emperors being Yao and Shun; while Yü the Great was made to succeed Shun and found a long line of 'emperors', the so-called Hsia dynasty. This made it somewhat difficult to fit in Yi the Archer, but he was at length brought into the system as a rebel who seized the throne from Yü's grandson. Once the order of these 'rulers' had been established, it was natural to take the next step and try to provide them with dates. Although the dates thus obtained were completely fictitious, they are often to be found in the older books dealing with China in western languages. It is important to realise that not merely are the dates given for such periods as the Hsia dynasty completely unsupported, but that so far archaeologists have not found any evidence for the very existence of such a dynasty.



Left: The Chinese Shang Dynasty Great Tomb at Wu-kuan-ts'un, Anyang;  
right: Bronze ritual vessel with swing handle, showing a tiger clasping and  
perhaps protecting a man or boy. Shang Dynasty.



Soon after the middle of the second millennium B.C. a much more highly developed culture appeared in the mud-walled cities of the North China Plain, associated with the Shang people. It is not known whether the Shang originated in China or not, but they certainly appear to have introduced both bronze-casting and the art of writing. Our knowledge of the Shang is mainly based upon excavations carried out by the Chinese at Anyang, to the north of the Yellow River, from 1929 onwards. Anyang seems to have been the Shang capital for about two centuries from 1300 B.C. Here were found remains of houses and storage rooms, as well as enormous tomb pits in which the Shang kings were buried, along with scores of their retainers who were put to death in order that they might follow their master into the next world. Sometime during the Shang period the use of horse-drawn chariots was adopted, and these have also been found buried in the tombs of lords and kings.

In spite of their early date, the Shang bronzes are far from being primitive; the ornate bronze vessels cast in this period, generally in the shape of some animal, and used for holding the food or wine in sacrificial ceremonies, are amongst the finest ever made both in China and in the world. The religion of Shang times was partly the worship of natural divinities, such as the gods of rain, wind, and the Yellow River, and partly a cult of the royal ancestors. The Shang kings believed themselves descended from a god, and believed moreover that each ruler became a powerful spirit after his death, and could continue to exercise power over the destinies of men on earth. To placate the spirits of the Shang ancestors sacrifices were necessary, both of men, generally prisoners of war, and of animals and fermented liquors. The will of the ancestors was constantly sought by the ruler before embarking upon a major enterprise, such as a military campaign or a hunt; it could be discovered through an oracle, obtained by applying a heated rod to the lower surface of an animal bone. This would cause cracks to appear upon the upper surface, and these could then be read in much the same way as tea-leaves in a cup by a countryside fortune-teller today. Frequently the question to be asked of the ancestors was also inscribed upon the bone, and sometimes the interpretation of the answer given by the oracle as well. Any bone used for divination in this way became a sacred object, and was buried to prevent defilement. Hundreds of such inscribed bones were unearthed at Anyang, and from the inscriptions upon them much of our knowledge of life under the Shang is derived, since the language in which the texts are written is recognizably Chinese and they can therefore be read, although there are naturally a great many words and phrases which are no longer used and cannot be understood.

The earliest Chinese historians, who began to write the history of their country almost a thousand years after the fall of the Shang, seem to have been unaware of the existence of the oracle bones, which had then long been buried in the earth. These chroniclers of the centuries immediately



Oracle bones with the earliest known Chinese writing.

before and after the Christian era represented the Shang dynasty as having been founded by a certain T'ang 'the Completer', a virtuous man who lived in the time of Chieh, the last ruler of Hsia. With the passing of time, the rulers of the Hsia line had become increasingly brutal and incompetent, and Chieh was the worst of the lot; the people therefore turned to T'ang, who overthrew Chieh and founded a dynasty of his own. We do not know how much truth lies behind this story since, although a name which has been identified with T'ang does occur amongst the ancestors mentioned on the oracle bones, nowhere do the oracle inscriptions refer to Hsia.

According again to the later Chinese historians, the Shang dynasty followed the pattern of the Hsia, its rulers becoming increasingly depraved. After the dynasty moved its capital to Anyang things improved for a while, but later rulers grew worse and worse until the last of them, Chou Hsin, was overthrown by a certain King Wu who founded yet another new dynasty, the third in Chinese history, known as the Chou. At this point archaeology can to some extent confirm the picture painted by Chinese historical tradition. The Chou are mentioned in the oracle bones as a people settled in north-western China, most probably in the valley of the Wei River, a tributary of the Yellow River which flows through the south of the province of Shensi. The Chou were agriculturalists, like the Shang, with whom they appear to have been at war. Later on, the Shang rulers seem to have made an alliance with the Chou, the lord of Chou marrying a Shang princess and becoming 'Warden of the Marches' on the western



frontier, where various migratory pastoral tribes threatened the Shang settlements further east. But the alliance between Shang and Chou was evidently short-lived, and eventually King Wu of Chou formed a general alliance of western tribes and, taking advantage of the Shang ruler's attempts to extend his kingdom southwards towards the Yangtze River, swept into the relatively undefended territory, defeated the Shang army, and sacked the capital. Chou Hsin, the last of the Shang, is supposed to have burnt himself to death in his palace, together with his favourites.

#### CHOU CHINA

The Chou conquest marked the beginning of a new chapter in China's history. In order to justify his claim to rule over both Chou and Shang, King Wu told his followers that Heaven had punished the last Shang king by taking away his right to rule and bestowing it upon the Chou. Thus was born the doctrine of 'The Mandate of Heaven', a belief influential in China down to the present century. According to this doctrine, Heaven bestows the right to rule upon a given line of kings, but if these fail to rule with justice, it can take away that right and confer it upon someone else who then founds a new ruling line. However, this means that one can only know whether a rebel has the Mandate of Heaven or not by waiting to see if he succeeds; if he does, then Heaven was on his side; if he fails, then Heaven was evidently still backing the dynasty in power, and the rebel's supporters were all guilty of treason.

As is clear from their doctrine of the Mandate of Heaven, the Chou rulers claimed a special relationship with Heaven, which the Shang did not. Instead of claiming descent from a divine ancestor, the Chou High-king was termed 'Son of Heaven', which meant that he alone had the right to offer sacrifice to Heaven for the welfare of all his people. Thus, just as the Shang ruler was the link between the world of the ancestral spirits and men, so the Chou High-king was the link between Heaven and man. The agricultural year could not begin until the High-king had ploughed the first furrow, nor would the crops grow unless the High-king had first taken part in a ceremonial archery contest, shooting arrows made of thorn-wood from a peachwood bow. So important was this ceremony that it has been suggested that the writing of histories and chronicles in China were derived from the habit of appointing a special official to keep tally of the score at the ceremonial archery contest.

The Chou, as already noticed, were men from the west of China, and their rule over the east was not accepted without dispute. When King Wu died soon after his conquest of the Shang and was succeeded by his son, King Ch'eng, who was still very young, a great rebellion took place in which some of the king's uncles made common cause with the son of the last ruler of Shang. After several years of hard fighting, the revolt was finally put down, largely thanks to the help given to King Ch'eng by another



of his uncles, the younger brother of King Wu, known to history as 'The Duke of Chou'. In gratitude for the Duke of Chou's help, King Ch'eng bestowed the territory of Lu upon his descendants. Lu lay in eastern China, near the great Mount T'ai in the present Shantung province, and it was in this state that Confucius was to be born, about five hundred years later.

The exact date of the Chou conquest of China is still a matter of dispute; it would seem to have taken place about the twelfth or eleventh century B.C. After the crushing of the Shang revolt, the Duke of Chou built the city of Lo-i by the banks of the Lo, a tributary of the Yellow River, to act as a Chou stronghold on the edge of the eastern plains. But the Chou High-kings themselves seem to have preferred to stay in the Wei River Valley to the west; thus the three centuries following the conquest are often called the period of 'Western Chou'.

In order to control their conquests in the east, the Chou rulers assigned various Shang settlements to their kinsmen or retainers, who then ruled these lands on behalf of the High-king. They were allowed to pass on their holdings to their descendants on condition that they appeared in the High-king's court at certain periods to pay him homage, and were prepared to raise an army to assist him in the event of war by conscripting the peasants who lived on their lands. When such a land grant was made to a Chou noble, the recipient usually had a bronze vessel cast by the royal craftsmen to commemorate the occasion. This vessel would then be used for offerings in the shrine of his ancestors, and would generally carry an inscription stating the terms of the High-king's grant. Since the inscribed oracle bones seem to have gone out of use with the fall of the Shang, these sacrificial bronzes are an important source of information about life in China under the early Chou, although what they have to say is extremely limited, being concerned almost entirely with the royal court and the nobility.

Fortunately this information can be supplemented by a unique collection of about three hundred poems composed during the Western Chou period and immediately afterwards. This collection, known as the *Shih-ching*, or 'Book of Songs', later came to be regarded as a classic and has been carefully handed down to the present day. From this book we can gain some idea of the life of the ordinary man in Chou China.

Far it stretches, that big field;  
Every year we take ten thousand.  
I take last year's crop  
And feed my labourers.  
For a long time we have had good harvests,  
And now they are off to the southern acres,  
Some weeding, some banking.  
The wine-millet and cooking-millet are as lusty  
As we prayed for, as we willed.  
Fine, my chosen men!<sup>2</sup>



Broken were our axes  
 And chipped our hatchets.  
 But since the Duke of Chou came to the East  
 Throughout the kingdoms all is well.  
 He has shown compassion to us people,  
 He has greatly helped us.<sup>3</sup>

The earlier Chou High-kings were active men, several of whom seem to have travelled round their dominions and to have attempted to extend their rule southwards towards the Yangtze. But here they were driven back by tribal peoples who were developing their own culture and coming together to form a powerful state, later known as Ch'u. Towards the end of Western Chou the rulers remained in their western capital while their servants, the dukes and marquises of the eastern plain, ruled almost like independent princes. In 843 B.C. the reigning High-king was driven out of his capital and forced to live in exile until his death fifteen years later. This shows how far the power of the royal house had declined; it is also the first certain date in Chinese history. Finally in 771 B.C. a group of unconquered western tribes swept down out of the hills and sacked the western capital. The High-king was killed but his son, King P'ing, was saved by various lords and escorted further east, to Lo-i, where he reigned for half a century.

The long reign of King P'ing shows that he must have come to the throne very young; moreover, since he owed his safety to the feudal princes, he was certainly not in any position to oppose them. From his time onwards, the Chou High-kings were mere figureheads. They continued to have a religious importance for all the Chinese world but their political control ended outside the walls of their own capital, or even of their own palace. Unlike the western capital, which lay on the fringes of the Chinese world, Lo-i was surrounded by the territories of powerful feudal princes, such as the rulers of Chin to the north of the Yellow River, who were a great deal stronger than the 'Son of Heaven'. For centuries the history of China is taken up by accounts of struggles amongst these princes, and of wars against the so-called 'barbarians'. These were peoples who, although they lived in the Yellow River Valley and adjacent areas, had not adopted the agricultural techniques of the Chou and Shang peoples and so remained more primitive. Often they were driven from their lands by the Chou, who wished to take their territory for farmland; they retaliated by raiding the Chou settlements, and sometimes by wiping them out. It was a group of these 'barbarians' who had sacked the Chou western capital in 771, and in the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. they are frequently found, either

<sup>2</sup> and <sup>3</sup> There are several English translations of the *Shih-ching*. The translations of the two poems given here are from Arthur Waley's *The Book of Songs*, Grove Press, New York, 1960.

fighting against the Chou princes or making alliances with one prince against another.

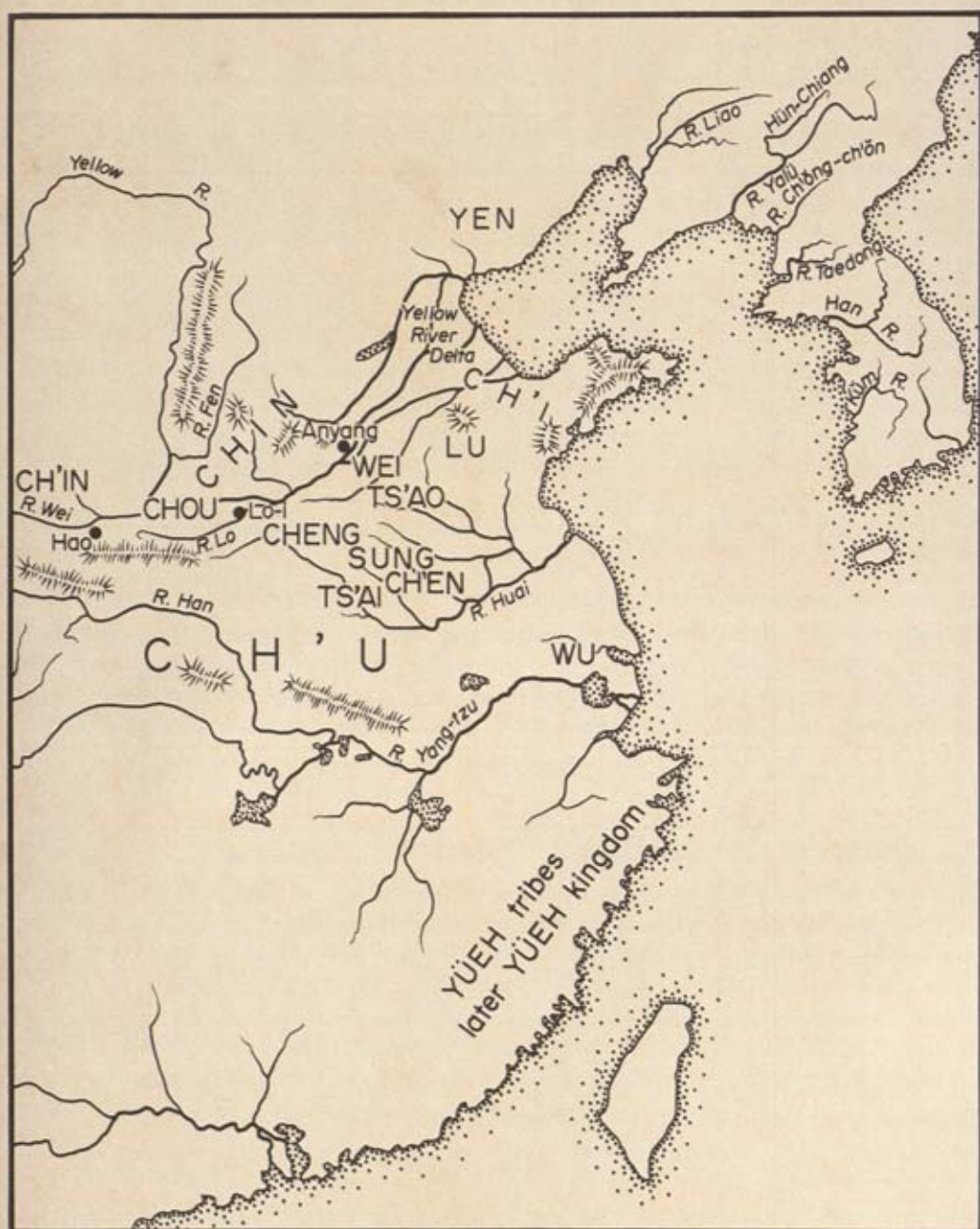
As a result of the wars of the 'Spring and Autumn' period (722-481 B.C., so called because of the 'Spring and Autumn' chronicle, long attributed to Confucius, which describes the history of this time) many of the smaller principalities disappeared, swallowed up by the greater states. Chin, which at one time had looked like re-uniting the Chinese world, broke up into three, while the Wei Valley, from which the Chou had come, was taken over by another semi-barbaric state named Ch'in. It was from this state that our word China is probably derived.

In the midst of this period of constant strife lived Confucius (551-479 B.C.) almost certainly the most famous Chinese who has ever lived. Confucius, who rose to be a minister in his native state of Lu, saw the disorders of his day as due to the decline of the ancient concepts of status and duty which had held Chou society together. He called for a return to such virtues as filial piety, sincerity, sympathy, and loyalty, and taught his followers, 'Never do to others what you would not want done to yourself'. But Confucius was in some respects a revolutionary, as for example when he urged that moral worth, not aristocratic birth, should be the reason for giving a man office. Disenchanted with his own ruler, Confucius travelled throughout China for more than ten years, searching unsuccessfully for a prince who would put his doctrines into practice. Eventually he returned to Lu to teach a few disciples and died a disappointed man, leaving behind him the memory of various sayings which his disciples eventually collected and made into a book, the *Lun-yü* or *Analects* of Confucius.

Influential as his teachings were later to become, Confucius was ignored by the men of his own day. During his own lifetime he saw the warfare between the states growing ever fiercer, until by the fourth century B.C. only seven states were left—the three divisions of the ancient state of Chin in the north; the state of Ch'in in the west; Ch'u in the south; the powerful state of Ch'i in the Shantung Peninsula, enriched by trade which came partly from its long coastline; and Yen in the north-east in the area of modern Peking. Although not one of the stronger states, Yen is important because of its contacts with the tribes of Manchuria and Korea to whom it helped transmit Chinese culture, thereby widening the Chinese world. The period in which these seven kingdoms fought each other is known as the Age of Warring States, and is conventionally dated from 403 to 221 B.C. By this time even the religious importance of the Chou royal house had gone; the rulers of Ch'in, Ch'i, and the other states all claimed the right to sacrifice to Heaven, and when the King of Ch'in occupied Lo-i and deposed the last Chou ruler in 256 B.C., the event passed almost unnoticed.

Strange as it may at first appear, the Warring States period saw





China in the time of Confucius, c. 500 B.C.

tremendous cultural and economic growth within the Chinese world. Much wider areas were now under the control of more highly centralized governments, with the disappearance of the petty lords of the Spring and Autumn period. This meant a great increase in trade, while inventions such as the use of the plough ox and the water wheel increased agricultural production. Late in the period money came into use, various states minting coins in the shape of spades or knives. The destruction of the old aristocracy also meant a much greater social fluidity—a man might rise from horse-merchant to prime minister, or from thief to general.



Inscribed coins from the Warring States period. The example of 'knife-money' on the left comes from the state of Ch'i.

This instability encouraged men to speculate about the nature of life and the reasons for the chaos which they saw all around them. Philosophical schools developed and produced outstanding thinkers such as the Confucian Mencius (fourth to third centuries) who maintained that man was naturally good, and Hsün-tzu (298-228 B.C.) who believed that man



was naturally evil. There were also the Taoists (pronounced 'dowists') who believed that the secret of living the good life was to be humble and behave naturally. They derived their name from the book *Tao-te-ching*, sometimes translated as 'The Classic of the Way (*tao*) and its Power (*te*)', which has probably been translated into English more times than any other Chinese book. In contrast to the Taoists were the Legalists, two of whose leading thinkers, Han Fei-tzu (died 233 B.C.) and Li Ssu (died 208 B.C.) had been students of Hsün-tzu. Starting from the position that men were by nature evil, the Legalists reasoned that society could only survive if the ruler enforced strict laws (hence the name of the school). They argued that if punishment was made both horrifying and unavoidable, people's inherent self-interest would keep them from wrongdoing; for this reason they advocated collective punishments, a whole group of men being punished for the misdemeanour of a single member of the group. This would give each member of the group a motive for spying on his fellows to make sure that they did not infringe the law in any way.

Legalism was embraced as a ruling philosophy by the kings of Ch'in; using stern laws to discourage all occupations other than agriculture or the army, they built up a tremendously strong military machine, aided by the fact that they were amongst the first to make use of worked iron for weapons (the use of cast iron had long been known, but since thin pieces of cast iron tend to be brittle, the introduction of iron casting, as opposed to iron forging, did not really constitute a technological advance in China). As already noticed, it was the Ch'in armies who brought more than eight hundred years of the Chou dynasty to an end in 256; during the following decades they struck again and again across China from west to east. All attempts to oppose a unified alliance against Ch'in failed because of the mutual rivalries of the other six states, and by 221 B.C. they had all fallen before this military colossus, and China was united under a rule of iron.

#### THE FIRST EMPIRE

The Ch'in unification is an event as crucial in Chinese history as the Norman conquest is in the history of England, for although the rule of the Ch'in themselves over all China lasted less than twenty years, they set the pattern for the development of Chinese governmental institutions for the next two millennia. Immediately after the conquest the king of Ch'in proclaimed himself 'The First Emperor' (Ch'in Shih Huang-ti) using a title which had previously been applied to divinities but never to men. He was the first emperor of a dynasty which was intended to last for ten thousand generations, and which in fact lasted for two generations. Before him all his subjects were equally inferior; instead of delegating his authority in the provinces to local lords, as the Chou had done, Ch'in Shih Huang-ti, on the advice of Li Ssu, divided China into 36 (later 42) administrative areas termed 'commanderies' (*chün*) with a civil governor, a military

governor, and a third man to act as supervisor at the head of each commandery. Each commandery was subdivided into smaller areas, termed 'prefectures' (*hsien*) which were to be governed in the same way. The idea was, once again, that by vesting local government in several people instead of one lord, each of the three local heads would serve to keep a check on the other two. For greater security against the development of local power bases, governors were frequently shifted from one commandery to another; they were also required to conscript peasants for forced labour on huge government undertakings, such as the unification of the Great Wall across northern China.

Li Ssu also advised the emperor to stamp out any lingering attachment to the traditions of pre-Ch'in China by sending out imperial commissioners to confiscate any books of history, poetry, or philosophy dating from before the conquest. All such books were to be burnt, with the exception of one copy which was reserved for the imperial library. Ordinary people were only permitted to retain treatises of a severely practical nature, such as works on husbandry or medicine. The penalty for concealing books from the imperial commissioners was, of course, death together with all the members of one's family, and the families of several scholars are said to have been buried alive because they had violated the imperial order. By this decree, issued in 213 B.C. and generally called 'the Burning of the Books', it was intended to eradicate all memories of the various states which had existed before Ch'in.

In order to ensure that all his laws were strictly enforced, the First Ch'in Emperor used to travel round his empire, and it was on one of these imperial tours that he died in 210 B.C. Li Ssu and the powerful eunuch, Chao Kao, managed to keep the emperor's death a secret until they had enthroned his younger son, a complete incompetent, under cover of whose authority they hoped to be able to exercise the real power themselves. But within a year, Chao Kao had turned against Li Ssu and destroyed him, going on to murder the Second Emperor. This sudden revelation of weakness at the centre of government encouraged all the simmering discontent against Ch'in rule to rise to the surface. Throughout the empire men who had broken one or other of the oppressive Ch'in laws, and whose lives were therefore forfeit, decided that they had nothing to lose by rebellion, and rose against the government.

For six years China was plunged into anarchy in which brigands and military leaders fought each other, and in the course of these disorders Hsien-yang, the Ch'in capital in the Wei Valley, was sacked and the Ch'in imperial palace and library burnt to the ground. Yet although various local leaders attempted to restore the kingdoms which Ch'in had eliminated twelve years earlier, the nation as a whole was so sick of endless fighting that when one of the bandit leaders, the peasant Liu Chi, also called Liu Pang, seemed to be emerging as the dominant figure, one region after



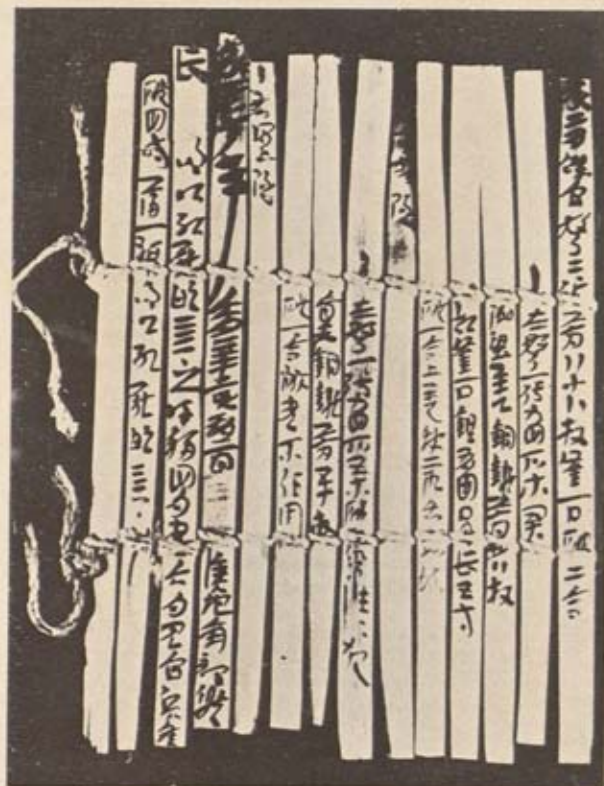
another went over to him. By the time of the death of his most able opponent, Hsiang Yü, in 202 B.C., Liu Pang was recognized as emperor throughout the greater part of China. He founded a dynasty, the Han, which was to last for over two centuries and then, after an interval, for another two centuries.

Liu Pang, or Kao-tsu, 'Illustrious Founder', as he is commonly known, realized that it would be impossible to reimpose the elaborate bureaucratic structure of Ch'in government after the civil wars. For not only had many of the Ch'in bureaucrats been killed off, but the general feeling amongst the people was towards a rejection of all the works of Ch'in. He therefore retained only fifteen of the commanderies under direct government control and parcelled out the rest of the country amongst ten kingdoms which he awarded to relatives and to his more outstanding supporters. Realizing that these large kingdoms could form dangerous power bases in the hands of enemies of the imperial house, he carefully got rid of most of those of his former supporters who were unrelated to him, arresting some, and driving others into rebellion and then crushing them. Later emperors felt that the kingdoms awarded to princes of the imperial house could be equally unreliable, and manoeuvred seven of the more powerful imperial princes into a rebellion in 154 B.C., which was also crushed. Whenever such rebellions were put down, the territory of the rebels was incorporated into the imperial system of commanderies and prefectures, which was thus, within half a century, extended to cover the whole of China again. Thus the Ch'in system of government was in fact restored, and became the standard pattern for later dynasties; for although kingdoms were still awarded to imperial princes, the senior officers in the 'kingdoms' were always directly appointed by the central government, and in the various later dynasties those princes who received 'kingdoms' almost never wielded any actual power in the area where their kingdom lay, just as the Duke of Kent has very little administrative power in the county of Kent.

Against one other enemy, Kao-tsu was much less successful. From the fourth century onwards the Chinese had come face to face with a new type of barbarian. Instead of the primitive tribes who had threatened the Chou agriculturalists and who had fought on foot, the Chinese, having now expanded in the north to the limits of the arable land, came in contact with the steppe nomads who moved on horseback with startling rapidity and could raid the Chinese frontier settlements where they were least expected. The men of the northern states of Ch'in, Chao, Wei, and Yen had attempted to fortify their northern borders against the nomads back in pre-Ch'in times, and the First Emperor of Ch'in had ordered the unification of all these defensive works into one vast system, known later as the Great Wall. But this did not remove the danger. Cut off from their northern Chinese pastures, the nomads reorganized themselves and a powerful confederacy, called by the Chinese the Hsiung-nu, emerged at about the

time when Ch'in was collapsing. Like most of the early Chinese terms for foreign peoples, Hsiung-nu is an insulting expression which means 'fierce slaves'.

Mao-tun, the leader of the Hsiung-nu confederacy, was a ruler of outstanding ability, and when Kao-tsu attempted to crush the Hsiung-nu and settle the northern border problem, Mao-tun besieged him in a frontier



Part of an inventory of weapons issued to Han soldiers garrisoning the Wall in Kansu at the end of the 1st century A.D.

fortress. Kao-tsu realized that, without cavalry, he could not hope to fight a successful campaign against the Hsiung-nu and that, after the exhausting civil wars which had accompanied the fall of Ch'in, China could no longer provide cavalry in sufficient numbers. He was therefore obliged to make a treaty with Mao-tun, according to which the Chinese emperor bound himself to pay a regular tribute (euphemistically described as 'presents') to his northern neighbour; he also had to send 'princesses' to marry Mao-tun



and his successors as *shan-yü* (a Hsiung-nu title roughly equivalent to 'emperor'). Although this agreement did not prevent the Hsiung-nu from raiding the borders when they felt that they needed to do so, it did help to prevent a major clash between the two sides for almost seventy years.

The long reign of Emperor Wu (141-87 B.C.) saw a dramatic change in this policy. Wu and his advisers saw the Chinese court as the centre of the civilized world; it was intolerable that the supreme civilized ruler should be obliged to pay tribute to a 'barbarian'. The emperor thus took 'Legalist' measures to strengthen his personal control over the government within China and to build up herds of horses in order to mount cavalry for an all out war against the Hsiung-nu. He also despatched an explorer, Chang Ch'ien, to the far west to look for allies against the Hsiung-nu, and it was thus that China first came into contact with the cities of Central Asia, many of which were forced to pay tribute to the *shan-yü* for 'protection'. Chang Ch'ien's journeys—which lasted for thirteen years, 139-26, since he was held captive by the Hsiung-nu for over a decade—did not produce the hoped-for western ally, but they did enormously enlarge Chinese knowledge of the world outside China.

The wars which followed were long and costly for both China and the Hsiung-nu. A line of forts was built along what is now the 'Kansu corridor' to separate the Hsiung-nu from the Tibetans and to outflank their forces in Central Asia. These forts were manned by convicts deported from prisons in China. In order to outflank the Hsiung-nu in the east, the Chinese in 108 B.C. undertook the conquest of northern Korea. Here one of the unsuccessful rebels against Kao-tsu, a certain Wiman, had established himself as ruler in 194 B.C., fixing his capital in what is now the city of P'yöng-yang. Emperor Wu felt that it was dangerous to leave an independent state in this angle, capable of playing off China against the Hsiung-nu, and his armies crushed this kingdom of Chosön and established four commanderies in its conquered territory. Similarly in southern China, another Chinese, the Ch'in army commander Chao T'o, had taken advantage of the disorder at the collapse of Ch'in to establish himself as independent ruler of Canton and northern Vietnam. Emperor Wu's armies took over the kingdom (111 B.C.) and incorporated its territory into the Chinese empire.

But the cost of these wars of imperial expansion was enormous. At Emperor Wu's death China was in the grip of an economic crisis which it survived only with difficulty. But there were other, more deep-seated problems. Owing to the general feeling of hatred for Legalism which followed the fall of the Ch'in, the Han rulers had turned to Confucianism to provide them with a philosophy of government. The doctrines of this school, which had played only a minor part in pre-Ch'in China, were now made into a state orthodoxy, and under Emperor Wu's reign an Imperial Academy was established in Ch'ang-an, the Han capital in the Wei Valley,

to teach the *Shih-ching* and other works which the Confucians regarded as classics. The government also selected its officials from amongst men who had been recommended by the governors of commanderies for their Confucian virtues such as loyalty and filial piety (there was no examination system at this time).

However, 'filial piety' was often broadly interpreted as serving the interests of one's family, and there was a tendency for these men, when appointed to office, to work in the interests of their own family rather than in the interests of the central government. In particular they often tried to improve their family's economic status by extending their land holdings, and encouraging peasants to settle on their lands as rent-paying tenants. Although the rents paid to such 'gentry' landlords were often extremely high—as much as fifty per cent of the crop yield—yet many peasants were glad to move on to the land owned by the great families and thus escape other exactions such as forced labour and military service which the government would compel them to perform if they continued to farm their own lands. Naturally the peasantry were particularly hard hit by these demands during Emperor Wu's programme of 'imperial



Panoramic view of the home of a well-to-do family in the Han period.

expansion', while they found that if they moved on to land owned by officials, or by men with official 'connections', they could be 'protected' against having to perform these onerous duties. Because of their position and connections, the gentry were often able to avoid paying land tax on their enlarged estates, which meant that all they collected in rent became



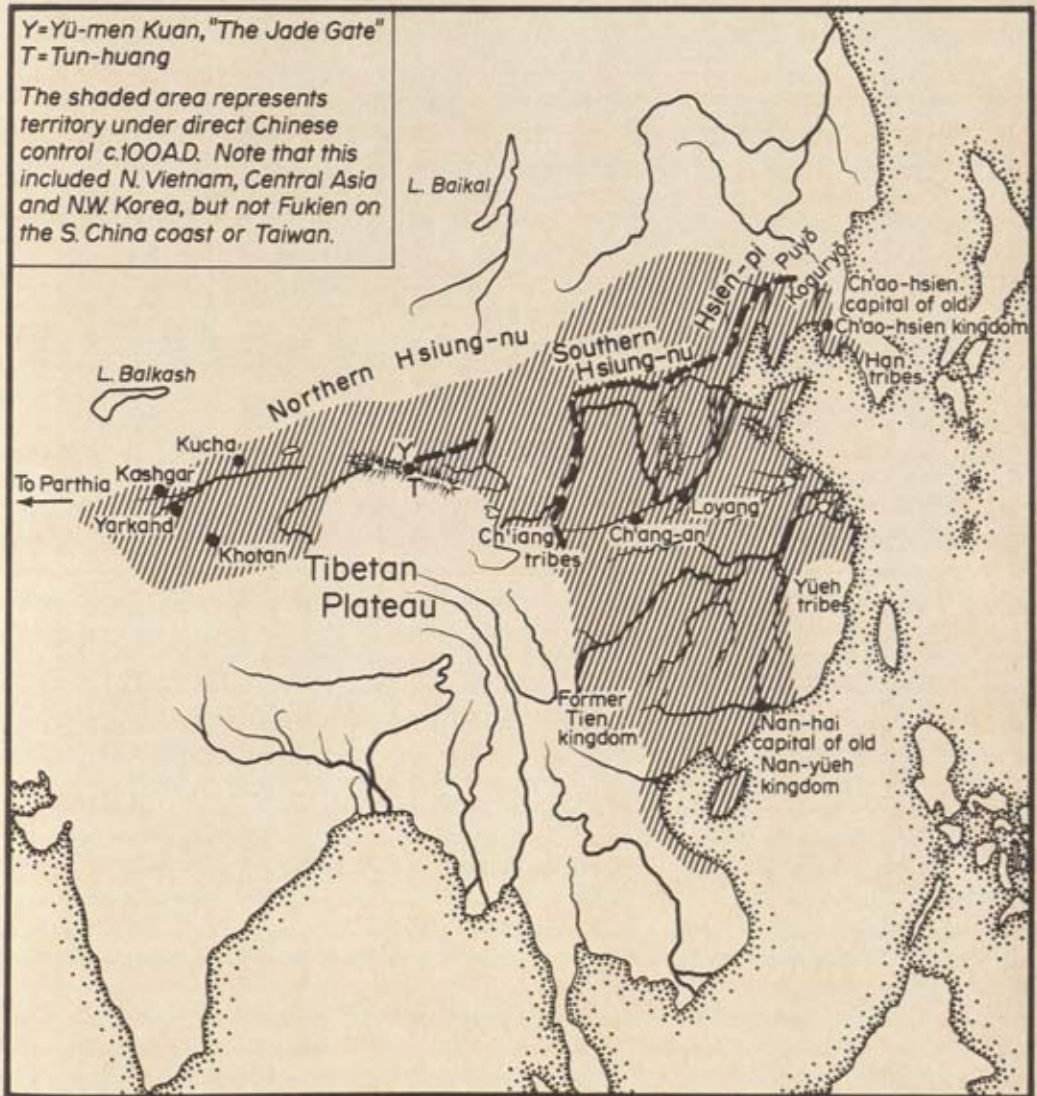
pure profit. On the other hand, these developments meant that the government was continually losing both labour service and taxes, with the result that it became increasingly difficult to pay the armies and to keep up the repair of irrigation works. And whenever the emperor issued edicts to correct these abuses, his intentions were largely frustrated by the fact that the officials who had to implement the edict were the very men who had an interest in seeing it remain a dead letter.

This was clearly seen at the end of the former Han dynasty when the throne was usurped by Wang Mang (reigned 9-23 A.D.) a powerful minister whose family had married into the imperial house. Wang Mang realized that the economic plight of the country was desperate; the collapse of the irrigation works along the lower Yellow River Valley had led to widespread floods, and huge numbers of peasants had been forced to leave their homes and were wandering about the countryside, starving. Wang Mang attempted to remedy the evils by restricting the amount of land any one person could own, by placing a prohibitive tax on the ownership of private slaves, by calling all gold into the government treasury, and similar measures. These decrees aroused the bitter opposition of the gentry who saw Wang Mang both as threatening their own position and attempting to reintroduce Legalism, the arbitrary autocratic rule which had characterized the reign of the First Ch'in emperor and the Han emperor, Wu. After three years Wang Mang was forced to rescind his land reforms but the gentry continued to work actively against him, while the peasants, reduced to desperation, rose against the government in a series of massive rebellions, of which that of the 'Red Eyebrows' in eastern China is the best known.

When, in spite of this mounting unrest, Wang Mang attempted to launch fresh campaigns against the Hsiung-nu, his ruin was assured. He fell a victim to a 'gentry' rising in favour of the deposed Han dynasty in 23, and for the next ten or more years China was again reduced to anarchy while peasant rebels and gentry leaders fought each other. Eventually Liu Hsiu, a remote descendant of Emperor Wu's father, succeeded in gaining general support and in establishing himself as emperor, not in the Wei Valley where the Western Chou, Ch'in, and Former Han had ruled, but in Lo-i, the old capital of the Eastern Chou now renamed Lo-yang. Liu Hsiu is known to history as the Emperor Kuang-wu (an emperor's personal name became taboo after he ascended the throne) and his descendants reigned until 220 as the Later Han dynasty.

The Later Han faced much the same problems as their predecessors. On the northern frontier the Hsiung-nu continued to threaten, although during Kuang-wu's reign (25-57) they were afflicted by succession disputes and divided into two rival confederacies, Northern and Southern. The Southerners sought Chinese protection against the Northerners, and Emperor Kuang-wu allowed them to move inside the Great Wall, a step

which was to have far-reaching consequences. The Chinese also came to an arrangement with another northern tribe, the Hsien-pi from Manchuria, who were paid a fixed sum for every severed head of a Northern Hsiung-nu that they brought in. Faced with this combined pressure the Northern Hsiung-nu migrated north and westwards across the Gobi; some writers



China and its neighbours c. 100 A.D.



have suggested that it was the Northern Hsiung-nu who emerged into Europe in the fifth century as Attila's Huns, but this is completely unproven.

Success against the Hsiung-nu encouraged Emperor Ming (57-75) the son and successor of Kuang-wu, to try to recover Emperor Wu's domains in Central Asia, and he despatched the general, Pan Ch'ao, with a handful of men. Since the days of Chang Ch'ien a great trade route had sprung up in Central Asia between China and the Roman Orient, Chinese silk being exported in return for Roman gold, as already noticed. Much of this carrying trade was controlled by the Parthians, whose empire bordered Rome on the east and who levied taxes upon the silk caravans. The Parthians realized that it would be to their disadvantage for the Romans and the Chinese to enter into direct relations with each other, since direct trade between the two would bypass the Parthians who would be deprived of a lucrative source of revenue. So when Pan Ch'ao sent a certain Kan Ying as envoy to Rome in 97, the Parthians advised the unfortunate envoy to go down to the shores of the Persian Gulf. Here, when he planned to cross the sea, he was told, 'With a favourable wind you can cross in a few months, but if the wind drops it takes as long as three years. And there's something in the waters of this sea that makes men homesick . . .'. Not surprisingly, Kan Ying was discouraged and turned back; thus China's first ambassador to Europe failed to arrive.

The year of Kan Ying's embassy also saw the first Hsien-pi raid on China for many decades. Having virtually eliminated the Northern Hsiung-nu, the Hsien-pi, in search of fresh prizes, turned to raiding the Chinese frontier themselves and became China's major enemies in the north during the second century. Moreover, when the Chinese tried to retain their holdings in Central Asia by using troops conscripted from amongst the Ch'iang people on the borders of Tibet, they failed disastrously, for the Ch'iang mutinied and devastated much of northern China. To make matters worse, almost all the Han emperors after Emperor Ming came to the throne as very young children, so that there were struggles between their relatives to obtain the real power. At the same time the Later Han dynasty was caught up in the same vicious circle which had afflicted its predecessor—those it appointed to office had a vested interest in defrauding the government. Once again it was the peasants who suffered first and who suffered most; a series of renewed peasant risings shook the dynasty, the most famous being the Yellow Turban outbreak of 184. When the generals who suppressed the Yellow Turbans found that the government was unable or unwilling to pay their troops, they turned against it and the Han empire fell, as it had risen, amongst a welter of competing warlords.

On the fall of the Later Han none of the generals proved capable of reuniting the country. Even Ts'ao Ts'ao, the strongest of them, who conquered most of northern China, failed to occupy the south and his fleet was burnt on the Yangtze by the fireships of the southern warlords in the

Battle of the Red Cliffs, in 208. The fall of the Later Han dynasty is therefore the end of four hundred years of unified government and the beginning of the Chinese Middle Ages.

However, Han rule left a deep and lasting impression upon China, where men still speak of themselves as *Han-jen*, 'the men of Han'. It was during the Han period that education in China first came to be based upon the Confucian classics, and in the time of the Later Han the Chinese first discovered the art of manufacturing paper, books having previously been written on bamboo strips joined together by leather thongs. It was also under the Later Han that Buddhism first made its appearance in China, having entered by way of the Silk Route from Central Asia and the sea-route from the south. Finally, it was under the reign of Emperor Wu of the Former Han dynasty that China's first great historical work, the *Shih-chi*, containing a description of the entire world then known to the Chinese, was composed by Ssu-ma Ch'ien.

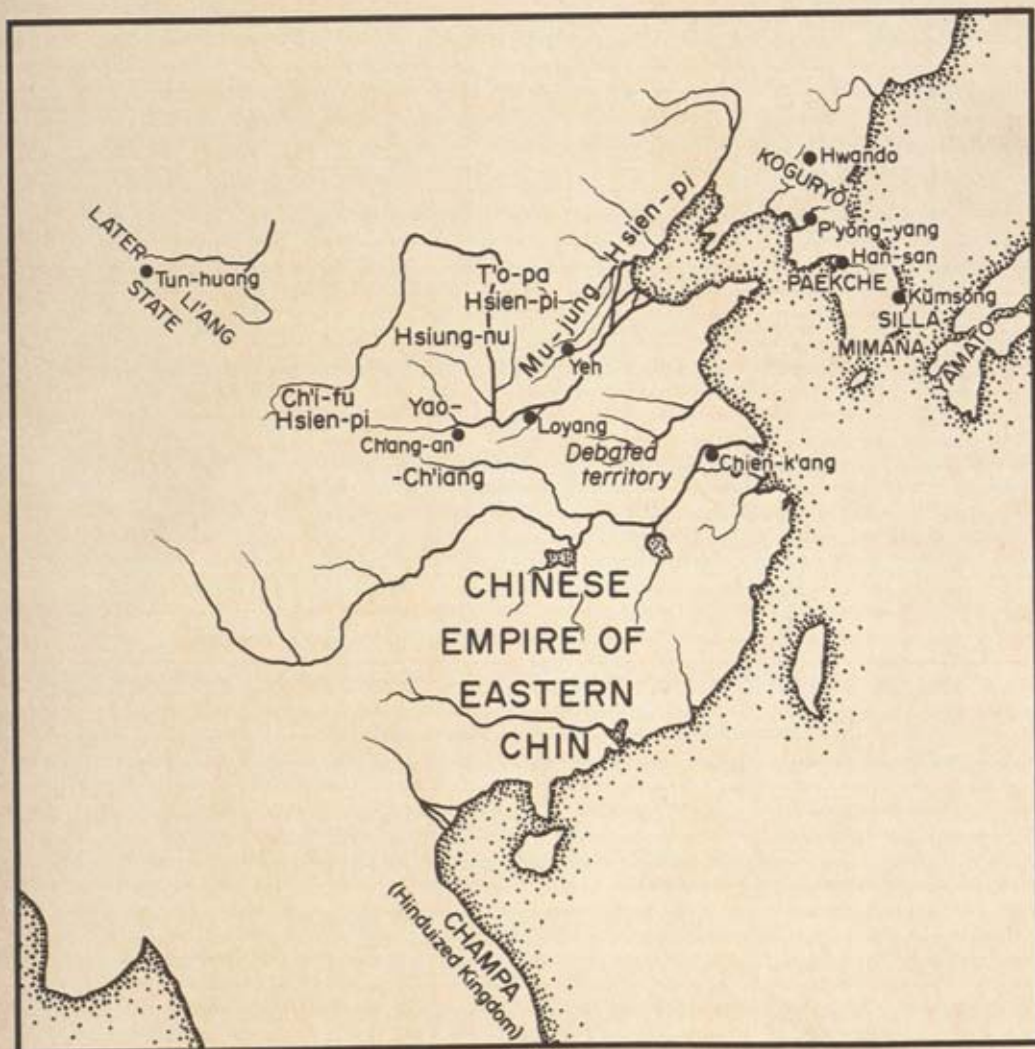
#### THE MIDDLE AGES AND THE SECOND EMPIRE

The fall of the Later Han was followed by the Three Kingdoms period (220-65) when China was divided between the descendants of Ts'ao Ts'ao (the Wei dynasty) ruling in the north with their capital at Lo-yang, and two other warlord families, the Shu-Han and the Wu, who ruled in Szuchuan and south of the Yangtze respectively. In the north Ts'ao Ts'ao's descendants were soon dispossessed by a powerful gentry family, the Ssu-ma, very distantly related to the great Han historian. The Ssu-ma established their own dynasty, the Western Chin, conquering Szuchuan in 264 and the southern state of Wu in 280, and thereby reuniting China. But all hopes that the stage had been set for a second long period of unified rule were dashed when the second Western Chin ruler, Emperor Hui, came to the throne in 290, for Emperor Hui was mentally defective and his reign was a period of anarchy during which his domineering wife and a number of unscrupulous uncles fought each other for the control of what remained of the empire.

During these Chinese 'Wars of the Roses' (known as the Eight Princes Wars) one of the princes made the mistake of calling upon the Southern Hsiung-nu to help him against a rival. The leader of the Hsiung-nu at this time was a partially sinicized chieftain called Liu Yüan, who claimed relationship to the old imperial house of Han. Seizing upon the fact that the Hsiung-nu were resentful of the exploitation to which they had been subject while living in China—for almost a century they had had no *shan-yü*, and had been governed by Chinese officials who sometimes had them carried off and sold as slaves—Liu Yüan led a Hsiung-nu rebellion, not in favour of any of the Ssu-ma princes, but to put forward his own candidature as emperor. In 311 the Hsiung-nu sacked Lo-yang and



Ch'ang-an, both of which had already suffered devastation in the civil war, and in 316 they sacked Ch'ang-an a second time. Unable to maintain themselves any longer in northern China, the surviving members of the Ssu-ma clan withdrew south of the Yangtze, where they established the so-called Eastern Chin dynasty at Chien-k'ang (modern Nanking). But Liu Yüan and his successors were no more capable of governing northern China



China in the Age of Invasions after the break-up of Fu Chien's empire c. 390 A.D. Mimana, in the south of Korea, was a protectorate of the Japanese state of Yamato from 369.



Left: Chinese gilt bronze figure of Maitreya Buddha; right: Korean soapstone image of Sakyamuni Buddha.

than the Ssu-ma had been. Liu Yüan himself died in 310 and a number of successors who lacked his ability strove to maintain a position as 'legitimate', if barbarian, emperors of China, while most of their followers were only interested in plundering the cities of north China and pasturing their horses on the North China Plain. Moreover, other tribes, such as the T'o-pa and the Mu-jung Hsien-pi, pressed in behind the Hsiung-nu over the undefended fortifications of the Great Wall. The north entered upon a long period of political turmoil known as the Sixteen States period, which lasted until 439.

For a moment in the fourth century it seemed as if the half-Tibetan leader Fu Chien, who gained control of the whole of north China, might be able to reconstruct the unified empire of the Han. But when Fu Chien's invasion of the Eastern Chin empire in the south was defeated in 383, his rule in the north collapsed like a house of cards and within two years he was a hunted fugitive.

Eventually it was the T'o-pa who succeeded in bringing order out of the chaos, largely because, like the Franks in mediaeval Europe, with whom they have often been compared, the T'o-pa leaders proved capable of joining forces with the local 'aristocracy', in this case the north Chinese gentry, who had lived out the period of troubles in fortified villas on their



estates surrounded by armed retainers. The T'o-pa formed a kind of partnership with these men; the army remained under T'o-pa control, while the Chinese ran the civil administration and produced regular tax revenues for the T'o-pa 'emperor'.

It was during this confused period that the Chinese colonies in northern Korea, cut off since the fall of north China to the barbarians, finally disappeared. For some time they had been under attack from the ruler of Koguryō, a kingdom which had arisen in the mountain strongholds of the upper Yalu Valley about three hundred years earlier, when the Koguryō tribes rebelled against Wang Mang's attempt to conscript them for his wars against the Hsiung-nu. The nucleus of the Koguryō state was formed by five tribes of mounted warriors who, like the Scandinavians of early mediaeval Europe, came to supplement their meagre upland agriculture initially by raiding, then by levying tribute upon the surrounding settled lowlands. While Koguryō extended its control in the north of the peninsula, the rival kingdom of Paekche emerged in the south-west, established by a number of refugee warrior princes from the Puyō tribe in Manchuria which was overrun by the Mu-jung Hsien-pi late in the third century. Both Koguryō and Paekche absorbed numbers of Chinese settlers who had remained in Korea after the fall of the commanderies, with the result that the culture of both kingdoms was strongly influenced by China. Chinese classics were studied and the literary language was Chinese which filled much the same rôle as Latin in mediaeval Europe.

It was during the 'Period of Division' that Buddhism made its first real impact on China. During the Later Han most of the Buddhist priests were foreigners who could speak only a little Chinese. Moreover, the very idea of leaving one's family to enter a monastery seemed to most Chinese not only odd but downright wicked, since Confucianism taught that a man's first duty was to his family. But Confucianism was closely identified with the Han dynasty's attempt to build up a world state. When this failed, not merely was Confucianism discredited but, in the midst of the apparently unending stream of disasters, men's thoughts began to turn to the possibilities of another, juster world after death, and on this subject Confucianism had never had anything to say. Buddhism was particularly popular in the north; many of the rulers were foreigners who were more sympathetic towards a 'foreign' religion such as Buddhism than to Confucianism. It was the half-Tibetan Fu Chien who in 372 sent the first Buddhist missionary to Koguryō, an important landmark since it was from Korea that Buddhism eventually spread to Japan. Ironically Fu Chien died in a Buddhist pagoda, where he was strangled by his enemies in 385. Under the T'o-pa the Confucian gentry, jealous of the enormous influence of Buddhism, persuaded the emperor to launch a persecution in 446-51. But popular belief in the religion was too widespread for this suppression to



be effective. Buddhism in the north survived this persecution, and a second in 574-7, to become more powerful than ever.

In the south the position of Buddhism was somewhat different. Here it was patronized more by the gentry, who were also interested in a revival of Taoism, and amused themselves by engaging in long philosophical debates about the metaphysics of the two cults. On the other hand the organized Buddhist church was never as powerful in the south as in the north, although several of the emperors were Buddhists. For this reason it did not appear to present quite the same threat to Chinese traditional values, which is perhaps why there were no persecutions of Buddhism in the south.

But although there were no religious persecutions, political instability was almost as chronic here as in the north. The Eastern Chin dynasty, which lasted until 420, was succeeded by a series of no less than four short-lived dynasties, all of which had to struggle against the T'o-pa rulers of north China. But, like the Warring States period earlier, this 'Six Dynasties' period, as it is known, was also a time of great cultural and technological innovation. Contact with India via the sea-route and the Silk Route gave a great stimulus to the development of Chinese, mainly Buddhist, sculpture. From this period, too, come our earliest references to tea, at first taken as a cold drink. The men of the 'Six Dynasties' also delighted in composing collections of anecdotes and strange stories and it was from these that the short stories of T'ang times, and eventually the Chinese novel, developed.

In the north the T'o-pa state fell apart in the middle of the sixth century, largely owing to tensions between the T'o-pa and the Chinese and between the sinicized T'o-pa of the capital (which since 494 had been moved back to Lo-yang) and the more conservative tribespeople who had been left to guard the northern frontiers. As a result of another period of confused fighting, the T'o-pa empire divided into two, the Northern Ch'i dynasty (550-77) in the east, and the Northern Chou dynasty (557-81) in the west. Of these two the Northern Chou was the more conservative and the less sinicized, having nothing in common with the ancient Chou dynasty except the name. Northern Chou conquered Northern Ch'i in 577 with the help of the Turks who had succeeded the Hsien-pi as the dominant power in the steppelands to the north of the Yellow River. But in 581 a Chinese general, Yang Chien, usurped the throne of the Northern Chou and founded his own dynasty, the Sui. Contrary to expectations, he not merely maintained his hold on northern China, but also conquered the south and brought the long period of disunion to an end in 589.

Although the Sui dynasty only controlled the whole of China for less than thirty years, during this period it made important contributions to the development of the Chinese economy and social order. Like the Ch'in, another short dynasty which it resembled in many ways, the Sui prepared



the way for a much longer period of unified rule after its own fall. Yang Chien, the first Sui ruler, known as Emperor Wen (reigned 581-604) sought to conciliate all interests by patronizing both Buddhism and Confucianism, and by taking stern measures against official corruption. His son, the Emperor Yang (604-18) carried out repairs to the Great Wall to defend the northern frontier against the Turks and also built the Imperial Canal connecting the Yellow River with the Yangtze, a tacit recognition of the fact that the Yangtze Valley was overtaking the north in economic importance and well on the way to becoming the granary of the empire.

But perhaps the most important measure adopted by the Sui was Emperor Yang's institution of the examination system. During the Han period, candidates for the civil service had been recommended by governors of the commanderies and sent to the capital for training. But although no man was allowed to act as governor in his native commandery, the more important landed families tended to form cliques linked by marriage alliances, with the result that a governor would only recommend for office people connected with his own clique. When these men were appointed their first loyalty was to the clique rather than to the state or the public, and they naturally came under strong pressure to connive at corrupt practices aimed at enhancing the wealth and influence of their party. To combat this and to attempt to secure men of genuine talent rather than men with powerful connections for government service, at the beginning of the Three Kingdoms period Ts'ao Ts'ao created a special official whose task was to grade the men of his native province in categories according to his estimate of their ability; a grading in the upper reaches would then serve as a recommendation for government service. But this proved even more disastrous, since it was an essential part of the system that the grading official was a native of the same area as the men he graded and he was thus much more likely to be exposed to influence from the great landed families in the commandery than a governor, who was almost invariably from another part of China. Indeed, so far from its original intention did this system stray that, by the end of the Six Dynasties period, grades had become hereditary titles.

Emperor Yang and his advisers conceived the idea of setting a written examination, strictly supervised, which would be open to everyone and would consist of five questions, either related specifically to explanation of the Confucian classics or of more general application. Full-length essays would be required as answers to these questions which, it was hoped, would give some fairly objective idea of the candidate's ability. At first this examination system functioned alongside other methods of recommendation but gradually, under the succeeding T'ang and Sung dynasties, it became increasingly uncommon to find a man who had not passed the examination in government service. The idea of replacing patronage by an impartial examination system was of enormous importance, not only for China, but



for the west too; the adoption of the examination system to regulate entry into the British Civil Service in the nineteenth century was done with the Chinese model in mind, and the effects of this reform are still with us.

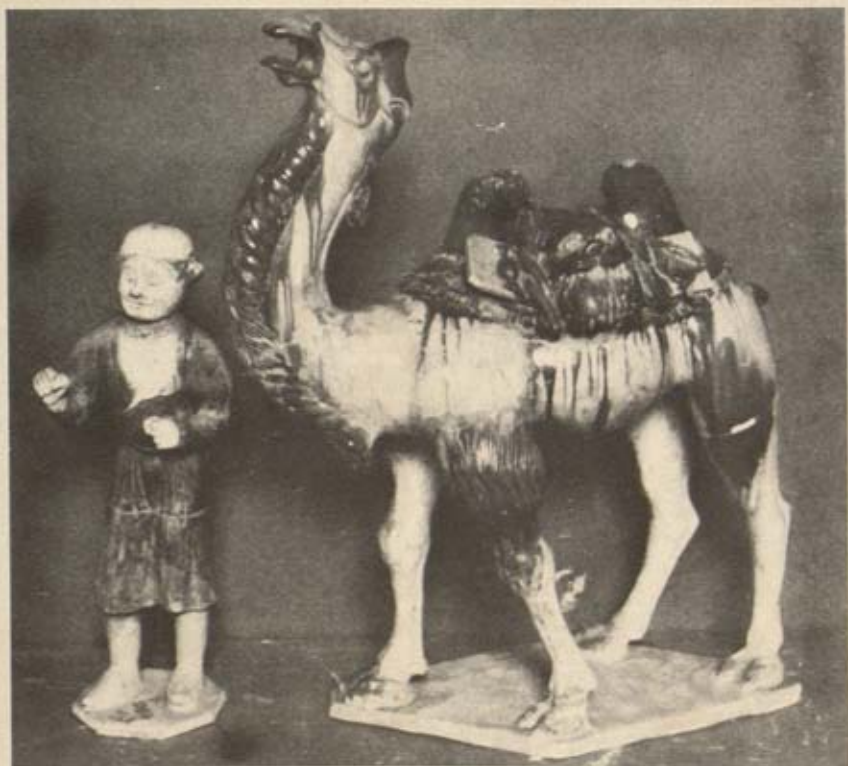
Korea was the rock on which the Sui dynasty foundered. Here the kingdom of Koguryō had not merely extended its control further south in the peninsula—it had moved its capital from the highlands of the upper Yalū down to P'yōng-yang in 427—but had also taken over much of Manchuria, including the Liao-tung Peninsula, which had formed part of Chinese territory throughout the Han period. From the end of the fourth century Koguryō's constant pressure on its northern frontier had also forced Paekche to move its capital further and further south and to form an alliance with the Japanese state of Yamato, which had already gained some kind of foothold in southern Korea. Meanwhile in the south-eastern angle of the peninsula a group of tribes had come together to form the kingdom of Silla, which with difficulty defended itself from both Japanese and Koguryō domination. Convinced that Koguryō was scheming against China by forming an alliance with the Turks, Emperor Yang launched massive attacks upon that state in 612, 613, and 614, only to have his onslaughts broken against the desperate resistance of the people of Koguryō. For the Chinese population already overburdened with forced labour on the Great Wall, the Imperial Canal and various palaces for the emperor, this further effort was too much and, before the emperor set out on his third campaign, north China was already swarming with army deserters who, having stolen horses from the imperial stud farms, rode about the countryside plundering. After his third Korean failure and the embittering experience of being captured by the Turks, Emperor Yang retired to his palace in southern China where he was murdered in 618, leaving brigands and warlords to fight over the remnants of his empire.

Eventually Li Yüan, an official in north-western China, succeeded in taking over most of the north, thanks to an alliance with the Turks. His son, Li Shih-min, then went on to conquer the south and to seize the throne from his father in 626. The dynasty they established is known as the T'ang, and along with the Han was one of the most outstanding in Chinese history. Thanks to the destruction of many of the old landed families in the wars which accompanied the fall of Sui, the T'ang government was able to implement the schemes for land reform which had already been put forward under the T'o-pa Wei dynasty and to establish the so-called 'Equal Fields System'. Under the provisions of this system, every adult taxable male from sixteen to sixty was to be given approximately 13.3 acres (a little over five hectares) of arable land, the greater part of which was to be used to produce grain which was handed over to the state as tax, while one fifth was to be used for the cultivation of mulberries and the rearing of silkworms, providing for both the family's needs in clothing and the production of tax silk. Only this fifth could be passed on to a man's



descendants; the remaining land reverted to the state at its holder's death or attainment of the age of sixty. There was also a tax which took the form of forced labour or service in the militia, usually on the frontiers but possibly in the imperial guard at the capital. Finally, officials received their salary partly in grants of extra land known as 'office lands' and 'rank lands', but naturally these reverted to the state if the official was degraded or dismissed. As can be seen from this summary, the Equal Field System was in a sense a return to Wang Mang's abortive reform, although much more comprehensive in scope. Although it was only rigorously applied in newly developed areas, it formed the basis of over a century of prosperity under early T'ang.

During these years Buddhism flourished as hardly ever before, except for a brief period towards the end of the T'o-pa dynasty, and Buddhist monks such as the great Hsüan-tsang (596-664) travelled into India to



T'ang dynasty glazed pottery figures of a camel and attendant, the means whereby so many of the world's treasures were brought to China.

collect Buddhist scriptures in the land of the faith's origin. Ch'ang-an, again the capital of China, became a great cosmopolitan city of over a million inhabitants including Hindus, Zoroastrians, Manichaeans, and even Nestorian Christians, as well as believers in the traditional Chinese cults. Outside China new states arose which looked mainly to the T'ang for their cultural inspiration, such as the newly unified kingdom of Tibet under Srong-btsan-gam-po (reigned c. 630-50) and the powerful state of Nanchao in Yünnan, established by the chieftain Piloko (reigned 730-48).

But T'ang China was tempted by the 'imperial dream' of the Han. In the north and west it endeavoured to reimpose Chinese control over the Turks and the petty kingdoms of the Silk Route. For a time in the seventh century this seemed possible, for in western Asia the Arabs had embarked upon their dramatic expansion and the rulers of city-states such as Bukhara and Samarkand were looking for the support of a great power to maintain their independence. The danger was underlined when, after the Battle of Nehavend in 642, the Arabs quickly overran Persia, and in 674 the son of the last Persian 'King of Kings' was obliged to take refuge in the T'ang Court at Ch'ang-an. But fighting in this area, the Chinese faced enormous communication difficulties, especially after Tibet became permanently hostile in the second half of the seventh century. With the destruction of the Chinese army in Central Asia by the Arabs at the Battle of the Talas River in 751, a whole era of Chinese cultural domination in this part of the world came to an end.

In the north-east the T'ang emperors, T'ai-tsung (i.e., Li Shih-min, ruled 626-49) and Kao-tsung (649-83), repeated the disastrous attempt to conquer Korea which had cost the Sui dynasty so dear. Eventually, after long and costly campaigns, their armies succeeded in destroying the states of Paekche (660) and Koguryŏ (668) in spite of Japanese help given to the former. But even so this attempt to restore the Chinese possessions in the peninsula came to nothing, for the armies were then needed on other frontiers, and in the end the conquests in peninsular Korea mostly fell to Silla, while those in Manchuria and the north were taken over by the new state of Pohai (c. 700-927). The effort at imperial expansion seriously overstrained China's resources, and led to economic and military decline and the collapse of the Equal Field System.

It would be unfair to leave the high T'ang period without some reference to its literature, for the Chinese poetry of this age has earned an enduring place amongst the finest in the world. Since English translations of much of the best of this poetry are readily available, we will make do with one quotation, and a brief one, in the hope of capturing some of its spirit. The poet is Li Po (699-762) and the poem *Song Before Offering Wine*, used by the Austrian composer Gustav Mahler in his *Song of the Earth*.



Have you not seen  
 How the Yellow River, which flows from Heaven and  
 hurries towards the sea, never turns back?  
 Have you not seen  
 How at the bright mirrors of high halls men mourn  
 their white hairs,  
 At dawn black silk, by evening changed to snow?  
 While there is pleasure in life, enjoy it,  
 And never let your gold cup face the moon empty!

## TOWARDS MODERN CHINA

The long frontier wars of the second half of the seventh century had seriously overstrained the resources of T'ang China. In order to escape military service and taxation, peasants moved to the south of the Yangtze to open up new 'unregistered' lands, with the result that their service and the taxation revenue they had provided were both lost to the government. Anxious to protect his frontiers from the inroads of the Tibetans in the west and the Khitan tribes (who had grown powerful in the north-east in the vacuum created by the fall of Koguryō) the T'ang emperor, Hsüan-tsung (reigned 712-56), stationed large bodies of professional soldiers on the frontier, appointing foreigners to head them. This was a suggestion of the chief minister Li Lin-fu, who reasoned that foreign generals would have no connections at court and therefore would not be able to use their military power to intervene in court politics. Thus Kao Hsien-chih, who led the Chinese forces to their disastrous defeat on the Talas river, was a Korean, while An Lu-shan, who suffered a similarly disastrous defeat at the hands of the Khitan in the same year, was a Central Asian.

But in supposing these non-Chinese military leaders to be devoid of ambition, Li Lin-fu was making the same mistake that the Ssu-ma princes had made in the fourth century. Suddenly, in December 755, An Lu-shan led his armies southwards to attack the T'ang capital, and immediately the military unpreparedness of the country behind the frontier armies was revealed. An Lu-shan was much more successful against the empire than he had been against its enemies; both Lo-yang and Ch'ang-an fell into his hands, and the emperor was forced to take refuge in Szuchuan where he eventually abdicated in favour of his son. Meanwhile An Lu-shan was murdered, but the rebellion dragged on under other leaders and the T'ang government, unable to pay its armies, was forced to call upon the help of the Uighur tribes from beyond the frontier, whom it could pay only by allowing them to loot captured towns.

Although the rebellion was eventually put down in 763, the 'Golden Age' of the T'ang was definitely over. North-eastern China was now garrisoned by armies which frequently selected their own leaders and were, in fact, only nominally under government control. The Uighurs had become

so powerful that the emperors depended upon them to protect them against other enemies such as the Tibetans, who occupied Ch'ang-an for ten days in 763. In return the Uighurs forced the government to buy great numbers of worn-out horses at tremendous expense to the treasury and stationed a garrison in Ch'ang-an which kept the whole city in a state of terror, carrying off goods from the markets and girls from their homes. The emperors were also obliged to patronize Manichaeism, the state religion of the Uighurs. But in 840 the Uighurs were overthrown by an attack of the Khirghiz, their hereditary enemies, upon their tribal homeland. Immediately the long-smothered anti-foreignism, which had been growing in China under the Uighur domination, came to the surface. The government persecuted first Manichaeism and Nestorian Christianity, then, in 845, Buddhism, seizing the Buddha statues made of precious metal and melting them down, and secularizing the monasteries. From this blow, which fell upon Buddhism when it had already passed the peak of its influence in China, the religion never recovered. Henceforth the many schools of early Buddhism were reduced effectively to two: Ch'an, better known under its Japanese name of Zen, which taught that an understanding of the world could be attained by meditation and intuition, and therefore could dispense with images and texts; and 'Pure Land Buddhism', which taught salvation through faith alone, expressed in the constant invocation of the name of Amitabha Buddha. Almost simultaneously there was a persecution of Buddhism in Tibet which led to the murder of the king, Lang-dar-ma, by a Buddhist monk in 842, and the break up of the Tibetan kingdom after an existence of just over two centuries.

Although some of its external enemies were removed, the internal weaknesses of the T'ang remained. In 874 came a second great rebellion. This time it was not a military uprising, like that of An Lu-shan, but a major peasant upheaval following a series of famine years, in character like the risings of the Red Eyebrows and the Yellow Turbans which had accompanied the fall of the Former and Later Han Dynasties. The rebel leader was Huang Ch'ao, who came from a family of salt smugglers and had repeatedly failed the imperial examinations. While previous risings had been confined to northern China, Huang Ch'ao put the whole country to fire and sword—apart from Szuchuan, where once again the emperor took refuge. In 879 Huang Ch'ao led his peasants southwards to sack Canton, cutting down the mulberry groves outside the city and, it is alleged by Arab writers, thereby causing a world rise in the price of silk. When his men began to suffer from the southern climate, he led the survivors back north to despoil Lo-yang and Ch'ang-an. Once again the T'ang government was obliged to rely upon outside help to overcome a domestic enemy; they called upon the services of Li K'o-yung, leader of the Sha-t'o Turks. But, although Huang Ch'ao's rising was eventually put down (he was captured and killed in 884) it was succeeded by a long struggle for



power between Li K'o-yung and Chu Wen, one of Huang Ch'ao's men who had gone over to the government side in the last year of the rebellion. Chu Wen gained control of the court, murdered the emperor in 904, having sacked Ch'ang-an for the last time, and in 907 forced the abdication of his successor in order to ascend the throne himself—he was only the second peasant leader in Chinese history to achieve this objective.

However, from the start Chu Wen's Later Liang dynasty faced several serious problems. It failed to gain the support of the military leaders in southern China, some of whom, such as Liu Yen in Canton, proclaimed themselves emperors. Worse still, it lost ground steadily in the north to the Sha-t'o Turks led by Li K'o-yung's son, who in 923 captured K'ai-feng, the new capital, and brought the dynasty to a close after only sixteen years. The period which followed was one of continuous upheaval, recalling the Sixteen States period of the fourth century. The Later Liang was followed by four other short-lived 'dynasties', three of them founded by the Sha-t'o who strove unsuccessfully to maintain control of north China; this is the so-called 'Five Dynasties' period—one of the 'dynasties' lasted only four years! Meanwhile in the south other military leaders established their own 'dynasties'—really independent states, such as Liu Yen's Southern Han state in the Canton area. It had been necessary to station large forces in Vietnam in the ninth century to repel the raids of the Nan-chao ruler Shih-lung (859-70). Now amongst the leaders who became independent at this time were the 'military legates' in Vietnam, who were able to foil a series of attempts by the Southern Han to annex their domains. These 'military legates' claimed to be loyal to the northern dynasties which had their capitals at Lo-yang or K'ai-feng—Ch'ang-an had finally been abandoned after Chu Wen's sack—but since these 'dynasties' were hardly able to maintain themselves in the north, let alone interfere in the south, this pretence amounted in practice to claiming independence.

At last in 960 a general called Chao K'uang-yin was able to establish a stable government in northern China and gradually to extend his control over the refractory south, capturing Canton in 971. Whenever he could, Chao K'uang-yin followed a policy of strengthening armies at the capital which were placed under his personal control, and of weakening those in the provinces, where military leaders were replaced by civil governors as soon as they died or retired. But this de-militarization of the administration was accomplished at considerable cost. In order to avoid long frontier wars which would have necessitated the stationing of powerful armies on the borders, the new dynasty, known as the Sung, was obliged to acquiesce in the independence of Vietnam in the south; while in the north, after some indecisive fighting, it agreed to pay tribute to the Khitan, who had eliminated Pohai in 927 and even captured K'ai-feng for a while in 946-7, and had established a dynasty of their own, the Liao, with its capital at the formerly Chinese city of Peking.



But, in spite of weakness in foreign policy, Sung administration within the area it actually controlled was both stable and prosperous. The examination system was now perfected, with the result that a much higher percentage of men of talent and scholarship throughout the empire were absorbed into the civil service. Arts such as painting and ceramics reached new heights while, since the dynasty drew more and more of its economic strength from southern China, agriculture was greatly expanded in the south, and commerce also.

During the last century and a half of the T'ang, the carrying trade in the China Sea had passed mainly into the hands of Koreans from the state of Silla. But with the murder of King Hyegong in 780, Silla moved into a period of internal instability which led to its complete collapse by the end of the ninth century. During the succeeding hundred years the control of commerce in Far Eastern waters gradually passed back into Chinese hands, with the result that the Sung government came to depend more and more heavily upon its taxes on trade which, particularly after the loss in 1126 of the whole of north China to a new tribe, the Chin Tatars, gradually exceeded the traditional receipts from the peasantry in kind (i.e., grain and silk).

During the same period printing made tremendous strides. Block-printing had made its appearance in China in T'ang times, the earliest example known being the text of a Buddhist prayer which seems to have been printed in the mid-eighth century in the Korean kingdom of Silla. By the beginning of the Sung period the use of printing had become much more widespread—although moveable type had not yet made its appearance—and copies of the histories and the classics became much more readily available. By the early eleventh century printing had become so common that the government began to issue printed paper money—the world's first paper currency.

Another feature of the Sung period was the renaissance of Confucianism. This movement went back to figures such as the T'ang scholar, Han Yü (768-824), who had strongly opposed Buddhist influence and had been exiled to Canton for his pains. With the emphasis on civil rather than military administration in the early Sung period, and the consequent growth in importance of the examination system, Confucianism regained the status of an unquestioned state orthodoxy which it had enjoyed in Han times and it matured in the struggle between the reformer, Wang An-shih (1021-86), and the conservative statesman and historian, Ssu-ma Kuang (1018-86), who composed the *Tzu-chih-t'ung-chien*, the first great general history of China to be written since Ssu-ma Ch'ien's *Shih-chi*. But the most influential of the 'Neo-Confucian' thinkers was undoubtedly Chu Hsi (1130-1200) who wrote a condensed version of the *Tzu-chih-t'ung-chien*, and also commentaries to all the major Confucian classics. It was Chu Hsi and his school who finally settled the argument about human nature in favour of Mencius, whose work was now elevated to the status



of classic. Unfortunately, so wide was the sweep of Chu Hsi's learning that those who followed him were hypnotized by his achievement, and by the early fourteenth century his commentaries upon the classics became the standard ones to which all answers in the examinations had to conform.

#### RECENT TIMES

For centuries the tribes living in the Mongolian steppe had fought each other, relying on neighbouring 'great powers' such as the Chin Tatars, or the Western Liao—a branch of the Khitan who had established an empire in Central Asia after their defeat by the Chin Tatars in the twelfth century—for support in their struggles. But in 1206, at a great gathering (*khuriltai*) on the Kerulen River, the Mongols recognized one of their own princes, a certain Temüjin, as 'Universal Ruler' under the title of Chinggis Khan. Chinggis had already built up the nucleus of the most powerful military machine in the world which was based upon a highly disciplined personal guard, an élite force of cavalry capable of remaining in the saddle as many as ten days and nights at a stretch. From this élite guard, Chinggis recruited his generals. In 1211-15, Chinggis Khan turned this military machine against the Chin Tatars, with the applause and assistance of the southern Sung, who saw only the destruction of a hated foe, without realizing that they were replacing one enemy by a far stronger one. The Mongols were glad of the assistance afforded by the Chinese since, although their cavalry was irresistible in open country, they needed the services of Chinese engineers to help them take walled towns such as the Chin capital, Peking. It was the resistance offered by these centres that delayed the Mongol conquest of all of north China until after the death of Chinggis.

Meanwhile the Mongols overran the empire of Western Liao in 1218, and in the east began to threaten Korea where, since the fall of Silla at the beginning of the tenth century, a new dynasty called Koryŏ had ruled, founded by Wang Kŏn, originally one of a number of competing warlords, who had managed to get the last king of Silla to abdicate in his favour and had then reunited the country. During the Koryŏ period, Korean culture had reached a new level of sophistication. The capital, Kaesong, was a city rich in fine buildings, and the country was run by a bureaucracy recruited by an examination system on Chinese lines, although entrance was restricted to members of those families or clans which were held to be of *yang-ban*, i.e., 'official' status—a feature which differentiated the Korean system sharply from that of Sung China. It was also during this period that the first major Korean historical works were written, such as Kim Pu-sik's *Samguk-sagi*, 'Historical Record of the Three Kingdoms' (in 1145). Moreover, in printing, and in the manufacture of blue-grey porcelain—so-called 'celadon' ware—the products of Koryŏ, which is the

origin of our word Korea, were equal if not superior to the best that China could produce.

In the summer of 1227 Chinggis Khan died, and after a brief interval his third son, Ögödei, was elected his successor in a *khuriltai*. But the change of ruler meant no slackening in the extension of Mongol power which, under Ögödei, reached its maximum extent. To the west Batu, grandson of Chinggis, burnt Moscow and invaded Poland, Hungary, and Bohemia (now part of Czechoslovakia); other Mongol armies overran Persia and threatened Baghdad, which was finally sacked by them in 1258. In the east, the last remnants of the Chin empire were destroyed in 1234, while the Mongols had already invaded Koryŏ and sacked Kaesong in 1231-2. The Koryŏ court, under the control of a powerful military dictator, Ch'oe Yi, fled to Kanghwa Island and continued resistance; but this could only delay the end, and in 1258 the court surrendered. Henceforth the kings of Koryŏ were to be puppets of the Mongols.

Meanwhile in 1245 one of the leading Buddhist dignitaries of Tibet, the Sa-skya pandita, visited Mongolia. The favour shown to him was also extended to his nephew and successor, the celebrated lama, Phags-pa, who invented a script for writing Mongolian and also visited the famous Khubilai Khan, a successor of Chinggis Khan (reigned 1260-94); these



Mongol soldiers fighting in Japan. From the *Mōko Shurai Emakimono*, a painting by an artist contemporary with the Mongol invasions, late 13th century.



visits led to the extension of Mongol power into Tibet. Finally, as could have been anticipated once they had overrun northern China, the Mongols turned against the southern Sung. Since their cavalry could not operate to such advantage in this area the campaigns were protracted, but they eventually ended in the unification of all China under the rule of Khubilai in 1279. The Mongols had already annexed Ta-Li, the successor state to Nan-chao in Yünnan, in 1252, and followed this up by the invasion of Vietnam where the capital, Dai-la, was sacked in 1257. Mongol forces also invaded Burma, Java, and even Japan.

But by the end of the century Mongol power had passed its peak, and the Mongol rulers—originally lieutenants of the Grand Khan—in Russia, Persia, and Central Asia were behaving as independent princes. Since the total population of Mongolia can scarcely have exceeded two million, and these were now spread thinly over an empire which covered almost a fifth of the inhabited world, it is not difficult to see how, from a comparatively early stage, the Mongols were compelled to rely upon other peoples, such as Chinese and Persians, and even Venetians such as Marco Polo, to run their empire for them. Since there were no longer any major campaigns to fight, the Mongols—who were no administrators—gradually became an idle aristocracy and their once near-invincible military machine broke down. While their empire lasted, it made travel safe between Europe and China as never before, but by the 1340's risings had occurred against the Mongol rule in nearly every Chinese province, and in 1368 the peasant leader Chu Yüan-chang recaptured Peking from the Mongol Yüan dynasty and established his own regime, that of the Ming. The century of foreign rule had encouraged developments in Chinese literature and art which had previously tended to be stifled under the increasingly rigid framework of Neo-Confucianism and the examination system. The beginnings of the novel and the drama in China both go back to the Yüan period.

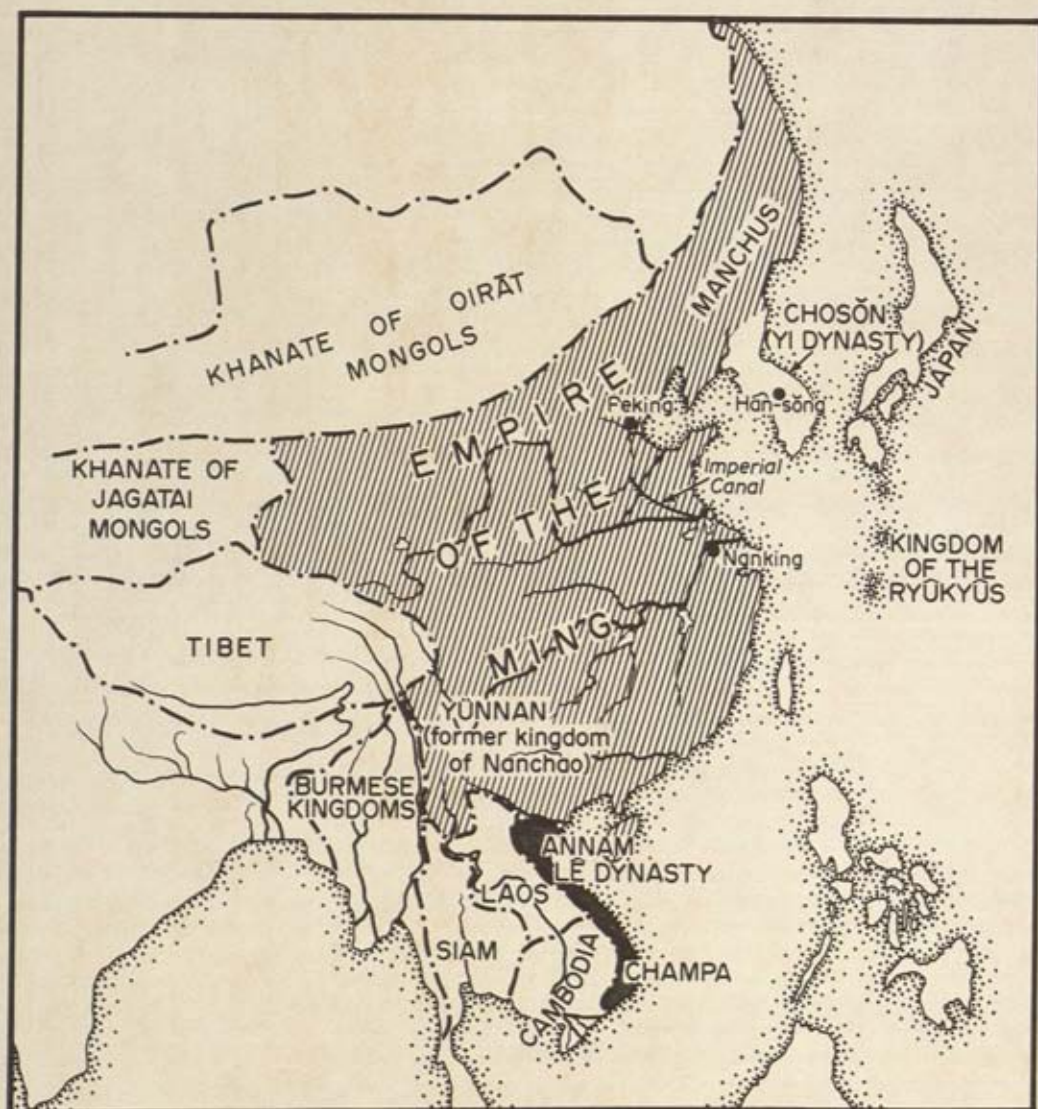
The expulsion of the Mongols from China led to prolonged struggles between pro-Mongol and anti-Mongol factions in the Korean court. These eventually brought about the collapse of the Koryŏ dynasty and the usurpation of the throne by General Yi Sŏng-gye who founded the last Korean dynasty, the Yi, in 1392. Meanwhile in China the restoration of stability under the Ming (capitals: Nanking 1368-1421, Peking 1421-1644) led to a renewed period of prosperity during which Chinese fleets, under the command of the eunuch admiral, Cheng Ho, sailed in the early fifteenth century as far as India and the Persian Gulf. It was at this very period that the Mongol Tamerlane was building up an empire again in Central Asia but, although Tamerlane conquered Persia and Mesopotamia and even invaded India, he died in 1405 before he could put his scheme for taking over China into effect, and his empire broke up, although smaller Mongol groups remained a constant problem on the northern frontier and even captured the Ming emperor for a year in 1449-50.



Tiger painted by Hyonjae Sim Sajong (1707-1769), a Korean artist of the Yi Dynasty.



During the Ming period Chinese relations with Japan were extremely strained, and Japanese pirates infested the coasts of both China and Korea. Even when Japan was more or less unified under the rule of Hideyoshi in the 1580's, matters were not improved since Hideyoshi developed ambitions to extend Japanese control to the mainland of Asia, and his



China and its neighbours on the eve of European expansion c. 1500.

armies invaded and devastated Korea in 1592-3 and 1597. Hideyoshi's real objective was Ming China, and the Ming despatched forces to aid the Koreans in their struggle against him. Hideyoshi's death in 1598 and the struggle for the succession prevented this war being fought to a conclusion, but for Korea and China the results had been disastrous. In Korea the Yi dynasty never really recovered from this blow, although it continued to retain the throne for another three centuries. For Ming China the struggle in Korea had allowed another enemy to emerge in the north: Nurhachi, the Manchu leader, who had united the Manchu tribes under his rule by the end of the sixteenth century and who, in 1616, proclaimed himself emperor. His son and successor, Abahai, invaded northern Korea and reduced the Yi dynasty to vassal status; at the same time he repeatedly raided north China where the Ming government had already proved unable to prevent large-scale banditry and peasant risings. Nevertheless it was only after Abahai's death that the Manchus captured Peking in 1644, and even after this the Ming continued to resist in southern China for some years.

The ruling house founded by the Manchus, known as the Ch'ing (1616-1911) was the last of China's imperial dynasties. Already under the Ming the first European traders had appeared off the China coast, although their influence was insignificant until the mid-nineteenth century. Before this the Ch'ing dynasty, under a series of able rulers, such as the K'ang-hsi emperor (1661-1722) and the Yung-cheng emperor (1722-36) was probably the strongest state in the Far East. Under the Ch'ien-lung emperor (1736-95) the Chinese finally took over Tibet, installing their own resident with a garrison alongside the Dalai-lama. But the Manchus had made the same mistake as the Mongols, endeavouring to rule China as a privileged aristocracy. The total Manchu population was scarcely as high as that of the Mongols, while by the end of the eighteenth century the Chinese population was probably well over two hundred million. The prestige of the Manchu rulers also suffered further blows when the British and French defeated China in the First and Second Opium Wars (1840-2 and 1857-60) so-called because the nominal cause of the wars was the refusal of the Manchu government to allow the British to import opium into China. It was as a result of the first war that the British took over Hong Kong.

Already during the reign of the Ch'ien-lung emperor there had appeared signs of serious peasant discontent in a series of risings led by a secret society known as 'The White Lotus'—these movements were specifically anti-Manchu. But the greatest and most significant of the risings was that of the T'ai-p'ings (1848-64) whose leader, Hung Hsiu-ch'üan, called himself not merely 'emperor' but—doubtless influenced by missionary propaganda—'brother of Jesus Christ'. The T'ai-p'ings captured Nanking in 1853 and made it their capital; they would probably have succeeded in overthrowing the dynasty had it not been for Western inter-





French cartoon of 1898 showing China watching helplessly as she is apportioned to the imperial powers.

vention. For after the Second Opium War, the Western powers had decided that it would be in their interests to support a weak Manchu government rather than allow it to be overthrown by a potentially much stronger T'ai-p'ing one. They thus helped to train Chinese forces and aided them



to crush the rising, which was brought to an end in 1864 after costing the lives of more than twenty million people.

But the Ch'ing dynasty, unlike Japan, proved incapable of modernizing and owed its survival for a further half-century less to its own strength than to the fact that the various western powers—Russia, France, Britain, America, and Germany—were far too jealous of each other to allow any one of their number to take over China. By the end of the century a modernized Japan had been added to the list of the powers who were anxious to exploit the Manchu weakness, and in 1894-5 the Japanese defeated China in a war which, like the earlier conflict in Hideyoshi's day, was connected with the question of suzerainty in Korea where the moribund Yi dynasty was tottering towards its fall. China's defeat in this war put an end to Manchu suzerainty in Korea, and Japan's defeat of Russia in 1904-5 left it without rivals in the Far East; in 1910 the Japanese annexed Korea.

Less than eighteen months later the Ch'ing dynasty was forced from the throne in China, when its leading general, Yüan Shih-k'ai, went over to the revolutionaries led by Sun Yat-sen and Li Yüan-hung—on condition that he himself should serve as first president of the new Republic of China. Such a beginning boded ill for the republic, and on the death of Yüan Shih-k'ai after an abortive attempt to make himself emperor (1916), the country fell into the hands of various warlords, while Sun Yat-sen's supporters endeavoured to maintain themselves in Nanking, and the Japanese extended their power in Manchuria where, in 1931, they established a puppet government under the leadership of the last Manchu emperor. The political turmoil combined with a foreign threat recalled the worst periods of the fourth and tenth centuries, except that now the conflicts were fought out with modern weapons capable of inflicting very much more destruction.

In the same year that Japan established its puppet 'Manchurian Empire', a Soviet Republic was established in southern Kiangsi province, with Mao Tse-tung as its chairman. The next two decades saw a three-cornered struggle between the Communists, the Japanese, and the 'Nationalist' Chinese under Chiang Kai-shek, the successor of Sun Yat-sen. From 1937-45 Communists and Nationalists 'co-operated' against the Japanese, and after the final defeat of Japan in August 1945, the Western allies tried to arrange a coalition between Mao Tse-tung and Chiang Kai-shek, and the former even visited Chiang's stronghold in Chungking. But once their common enemy had been removed, 'co-operation' between the two leaders proved to be impossible and they renewed the struggle which resulted in the final loss of mainland China to the Communists in 1949, when Chiang Kai-shek retired to Taiwan, thereby bringing to an end a century or more of civil war which, under one leader or another, had gone on almost continuously since the decline of the Manchus in the nineteenth century. Simultaneously in Korea, after the expulsion of the Japanese, the



country was divided between a Communist régime in the north, with its capital at P'yŏng-yang, and the Republic of Korea in the south, with its capital at Seoul, a division which, in spite of the Korean War of 1950-3, still continues.

## NOTES ON THE PRONUNCIATION OF CHINESE AND KOREAN

There are several systems for the romanization of Chinese, none of which has really gained general acceptance. The two most commonly used are the Pin-yin system (in Europe) and the Wade-Giles system. Since the latter is commoner in English-speaking countries, it has been adopted here, although the Pin-yin system probably represents the sounds of Chinese more closely.

*Vowels*

- a sounds as in English *father*
- e sounds as in English *pen*
- i sounds as in English *pin*
- o sounds as in English *cot*
- u sounds as in English *rule*
- ai sounds like the ai sound in *time*
- ao sounds like the ow sound in *now*
- ou sounds like o in *go*

*Consonants*

- f, h, l, m, n, s, w and y sound as in English
- k sounds like g in *give*
- k' sounds like k in *kite*
- p sounds like b in *band*
- p' sounds like p in *pen*
- t sounds like d in *den*
- t' sounds like t in *ten*
- ch sounds like j in *jam*
- ch' sounds like ch in *chair*

*Exceptions*

- ss sounds like s
- ts and tzu sound rather like dz in *adze*
- ts' sounds like ts in *boats*
- tz' sounds like tz in *quartz*
- In the syllables ssu, tzu, the u is barely audible
- hs is a rather narrower sh sound
- ih is something like er as in *worker*
- j in Wade-Giles represents a sound which does not exist in English, somewhere between the zh sound in *treasure* and an *r*

In Korean, the McCune-Reischauer system of romanization has been followed, in which the consonants sound broadly similar to their English counterparts, except that 'si' sounds somewhat more like 'shi'.

The basic vowels in Korean are pronounced as are those in the Wade-Giles transcription of Chinese. However, 'ae' is sounded as 'a' in *add*, 'o' is sounded as 'u' in *but*, and 'u' something like the 'oo' in *foot*.

yō is pronounced like 'you' in *young*, thus Koguryō sounds rather like 'Kogurea'.

ō sounds something between the 'u' in *put* and the 'u' in *hut*.



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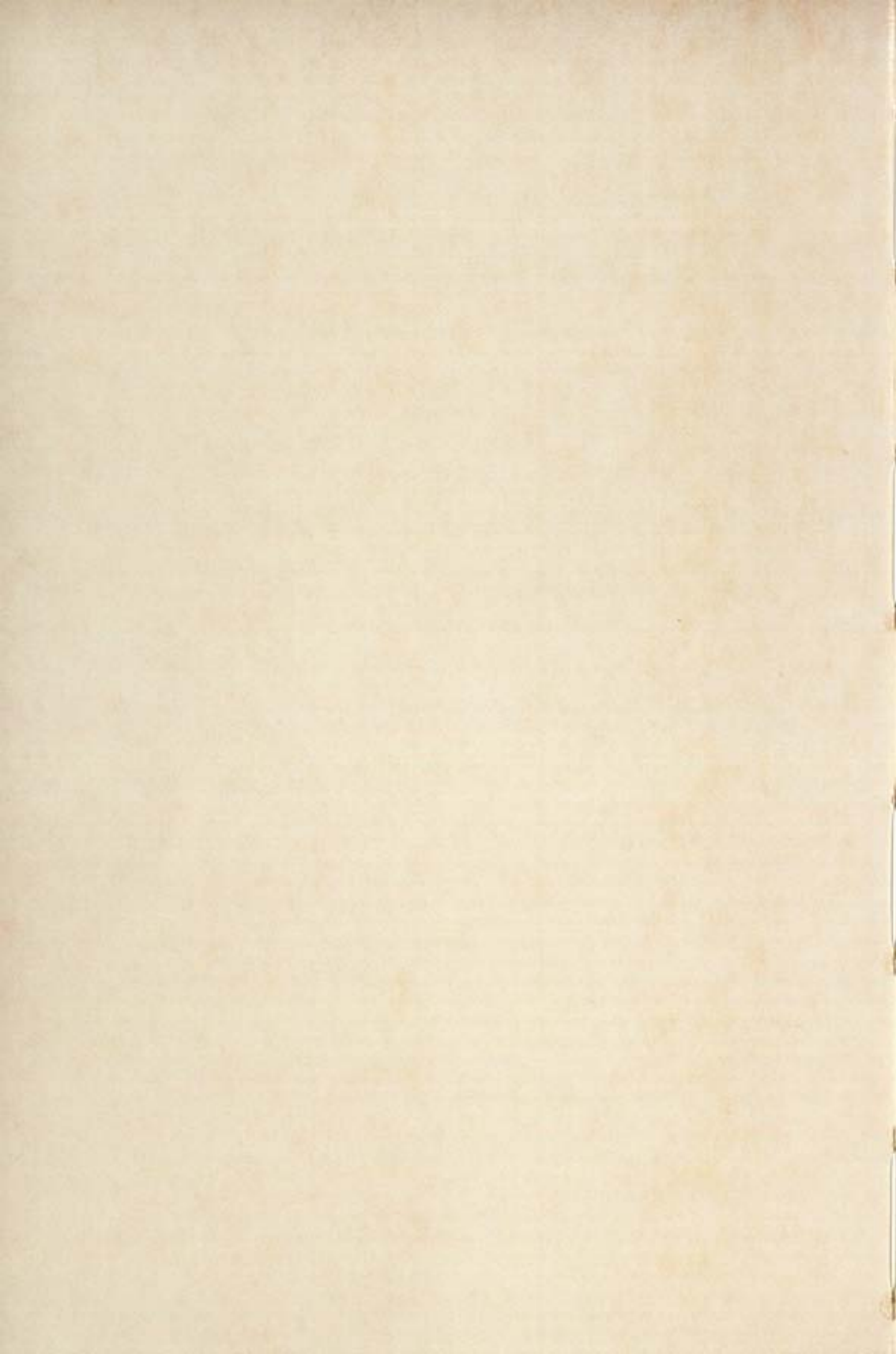
6

Japan

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ALYCE MACKERRAS





## ANCIENT TIMES

Geographically Japan can be compared with Great Britain—both are islands off the coast of a great continent. Because of their isolated positions, the civilizations of both countries developed much later than those on the nearby continents. When the troops of Imperial Rome invaded Britain in the first century B.C. they made a great impact on the then still backward people of the island. Japan was never occupied by a power from the mainland, but its early history was heavily influenced by the great civilizations of continental Asia, particularly that of China.

Chinese culture began to reach Japan in the last centuries B.C., during the flowering of the great Han dynasty in China. In Japan at the time the people still lived by hunting and fishing in primitive tribal communities. From the Asian continent they learned the use of bronze and iron implements and methods of rice cultivation.

The transition to farming led to the growth of towns and villages, since people remained in one place to till the soil. By about the third century A.D. the early tribal communities were settled in various regions, cultivating the land. Each region was governed by the head of the tribe, or clan. The clan members, who claimed descent from a common ancestor, constituted the élite of each community. Attached to the clans and ruled by them were workers who were organized into occupational groups such as smiths, weavers, armour-workers, rice farmers, or soldiers.

The early Japanese worshipped the spirits of nature, which they called *kami*. It was *kami* who caused the crops to ripen and the yeast in wine to ferment. Craftsmen had to know how to treat correctly the *kami* who inhabited their materials; otherwise the pots they were moulding or the buildings they were constructing would turn out badly. In these early times, people also worshipped as *kami* figures whom they regarded as remote ancestors of their clans. The most important of the 'divine ancestors' was the Sun Goddess who, according to legend, had sent her divine grandson down to Japan to rule over it, and had promised to guard and protect his descendants for ever. The deities who accompanied the divine grandson

The author is grateful to Dr R. H. P. Mason for many valuable suggestions.





Warrior of ancient Japan.

to earth were believed to be the ancestors of the oldest and most important clans.

The beliefs of the early Japanese later became known as Shintō. In early times the rites and ceremonies of this religion were usually connected with the growing of crops. The main ceremonies of the year were the prayers for a good harvest in spring and the thanksgiving after the harvest in autumn. This close association with agriculture is still a feature of Shintō today. Another important early Shintō rite was the Great Purification Ceremony to cleanse the nation of all impurities. According to Shintō belief, certain things were defiling, especially anything to do with blood, disease, and death. Contact with these was not necessarily morally wrong, but people who came in contact with such things had to be ritually purified before they were fit to associate once more with society. Ritual purification was obtained by offering prayers and especially by washing in water. One result of this belief is that there has always been great emphasis placed on bodily cleanliness in Japan, in contrast to most western countries where hygiene has been thought important for only a century.

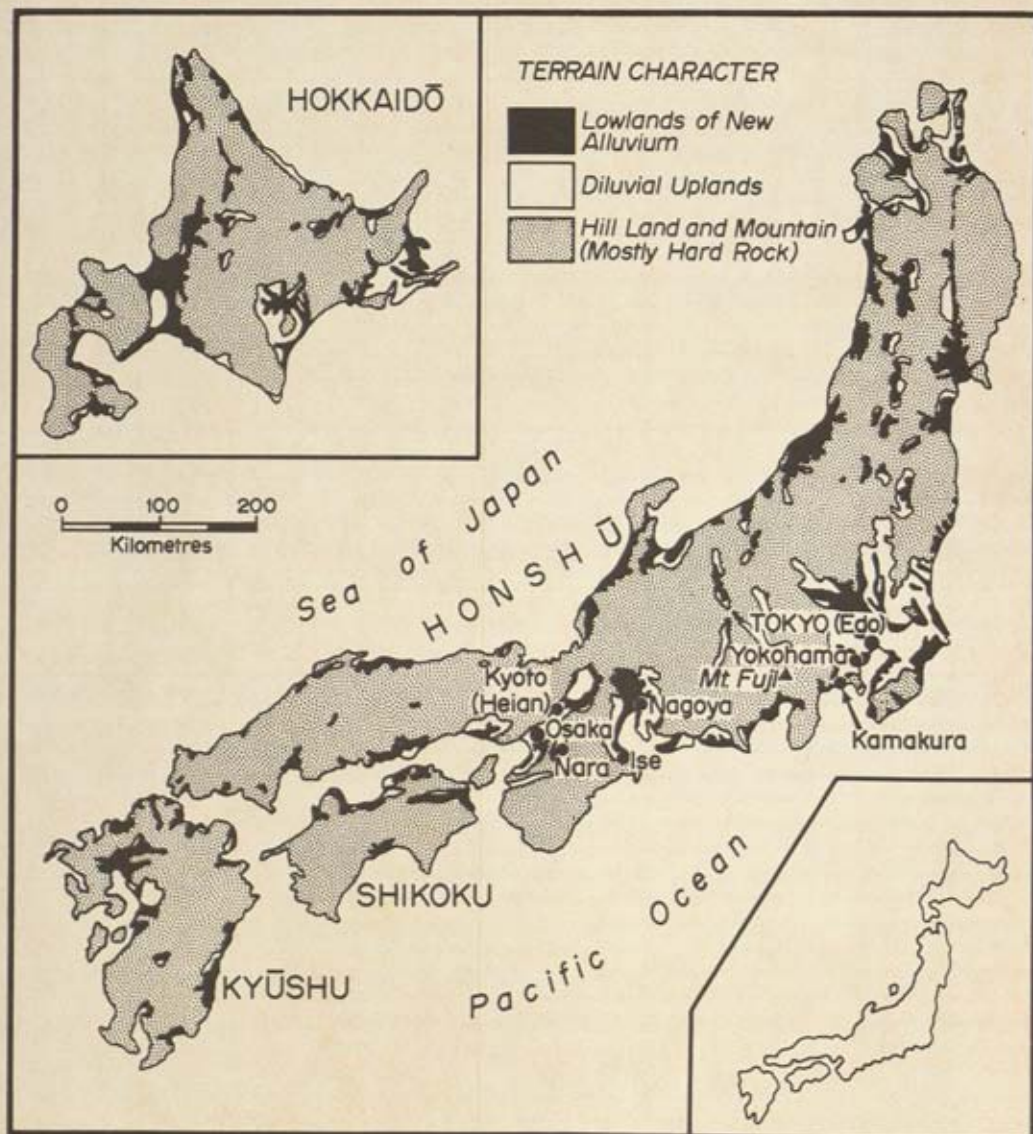
The Shintō deities were worshipped at shrines which were very simple, one-roomed wooden buildings. The roofs of these shrines were decorated with long, crossed rafters and at the entrance to the grounds of each one was an ornamental wooden gate called a *torii*. The most sacred place in the land was the shrine at Ise, dedicated to the Sun Goddess.

The rulers who claimed to be the direct descendants of the Sun Goddess were those of the community at Yamato, in modern Nara prefecture. By the third century A.D. this community had emerged as a leading one, chiefly because it kept up close contact with the continent and so was more advanced in both agricultural and military development than its neighbours. By the late fifth century the Yamato rulers were recognized by almost all the other clans as the descendants of the Sun Goddess and the legitimate sovereigns of all Japan, and it is from these rulers that all the emperors of Japan, right up to the present day, have claimed descent. The other clans, while recognizing the political and religious supremacy of the Yamato rulers, still ruled over their own lands and people.

During the fifth and sixth centuries, continental Asian culture streamed even more strongly into Japan. It was brought by numerous Chinese and Korean immigrants, many of whom were craftsmen or scholars. They became prominent at the Yamato court and brought with them new knowledge and new skills. Japan also had close relations with one of the Korean kingdoms of the time. Korea was very greatly influenced by China and in this way Japan imported much of the continental culture. It was during this time that silkworm cultivation, metal-casting, weaving, embroidery, medicine, and astrology were introduced into Japan. Perhaps most important of all was the introduction of writing. Until this time, the Japanese had possessed no written language. The Chinese had evolved a



system of writing by using ideographs, or characters. This had spread to Korea, and it was Korean scribes who brought it to Japan. In fact, Chinese characters were not ideally suited for writing the Japanese language and over the centuries the Japanese have developed their own systems of writing which are used together with characters. Even today, however, Chinese characters form the basis of the Japanese written language.



Physical features of Japan.

Equally important was the introduction of the great religion of Buddhism in the mid-sixth century. The precise date usually given for this is A.D. 552, when the king of one of the Korean kingdoms sent an image of the Buddha and some Buddhist scriptures to the Yamato court in gratitude for Japanese military help.

The court was divided in its reaction to the new faith. Many people saw it as a harmful foreign doctrine, the adoption of which would anger the native Shintō gods. Another, more progressive group at court advocated the adoption of Buddhism. They saw Buddhism not only as a great religion but also as a bearer of advanced Chinese civilization, much as Christianity was destined in the nineteenth century to be associated with Western progress.

The group which advocated the adoption of Buddhism by the Japanese court became the spearhead of a reform movement. It was all too clear to them that, compared with the continental civilizations of Korea and China, Japan was a backward and primitive country. Although the emperor was recognized as the sovereign of Japan, his authority was based primarily on kinship and marriage ties between the imperial family and those of the other great clans. The reformers wanted to learn from Chinese culture and study its political organization in order to create in Japan a strong, centralized government whose power was based on a firm bureaucratic structure rather than on the less reliable ties of kinship.

It is not surprising that Buddhism was seen as a means of enhancing the prestige and power of the central court. Buddhism was already a highly developed religion which had spread to many parts of Asia. To the Japanese of the time, the magnificence of Buddhist art and architecture, its complex doctrines and elaborate ceremonies, must have made a startling contrast to the simplicity and austerity of Shintō shrines and rituals.

The 'father of Japanese Buddhism', the man who did more than anyone else to establish Buddhism in Japan, was Prince Shōtoku, a famous Japanese statesman who ruled as regent for his aunt at the court from 593 to 621. He greatly admired all aspects of Chinese civilization and was a Confucian scholar as well as a devout Buddhist. Under his patronage, many famous temples were built in Japan, including the great Hōryūji temple, part of which still stands and is one of the oldest wooden buildings in the world. Chinese monks came from the mainland to teach their doctrines, bringing with them their own master craftsmen to help build and decorate their temples. Buddhist temples became centres of learning and the foreign craftsmen passed on their skills and techniques of architecture, sculpture, and painting to the native Japanese population.

Prince Shōtoku also began the sending of regular missions to the Chinese (then the Sui) court. Students and Buddhist priests accompanied the missions and stayed at the court for several years to study political and cultural organization. The aim of these missions was to help bring



about political reform for Prince Shōtoku wanted to see the Confucian ideal of a centralized, bureaucratic government adopted in Japan.

#### THE GREAT REFORM

Prince Shōtoku died in 622 and did not live to see his political reform carried out. But in 645, after the Sui dynasty in China had been replaced by the great T'ang dynasty, a group of courtiers headed by Fujiwara Kamatari, and helped by students who had recently returned from their period of study at the Chinese court, carried out a wide-sweeping reform. This became known as the Reform of Taika, or the Great Reform.

This reform was aimed at adopting outright the bureaucratic system of the government of T'ang China. A new code of laws was drawn up which proclaimed all lands and people to be under the direct control of the central court, to be administered by officials appointed by and responsible to the emperor himself. This step was directly aimed at undermining the independent powers of the clans. The elaborate bureaucracy of officials which was set up to administer the land and people under the new system was modelled exactly on that of China. There were twelve ranks of officials, each wearing a distinguishing colour ranging from purple for the highest rank to green for the lowest. All official writing was in Chinese and court officials even adopted Chinese dress.

The period following the Great Reform saw the high tide of Chinese influence in Japan. Embassies including scholars and students constantly visited China to study all aspects of T'ang civilization, while Chinese scholars and Buddhist monks streamed into the Yamato court and the knowledge they brought with them was eagerly absorbed.

In 710 it was decided to build a permanent capital on the Chinese model. Former capitals had frequently been changed on the death of an emperor, perhaps owing to the Shintō superstition about death. The new capital was built at Nara and was copied exactly from the magnificent T'ang capital of Ch'ang-an. The imperial palace and houses of the nobility were built in continental style, with tiled roofs and pillars painted red. For the next century, Nara became a political and cultural centre where Buddhism and the fine arts flourished. Many famous works of art still survive from the period, such as the lovely statue of the Future Buddha at the Chūgūji nunnery. Also at Nara was built, on the orders of the emperor, a colossal statue of the Buddha nearly 53 feet (or 16 metres) high. It symbolized not only the important place Buddhism had come to occupy in the land, but also the new might and glory of the central court.

#### THE CULT OF BEAUTY

In 794, the emperor and his court moved to a new capital which had been built on a site not far from modern Kyoto. The new capital was called



Wooden statue of the Future Buddha in the Chūgūji, Nara.

Heian (meaning 'peace and tranquillity') and was to be the home of the emperors for the next eight centuries. The next four hundred years of Japanese history are usually known as the Heian period, for at the court of Heian there grew up Japan's first great civilization.

For the first century after the move to Heian, the process of borrowing from China went on unabated. Embassies continued to come and go between the Chinese and Japanese courts and Japan eagerly learned all it could from the older and more advanced civilization of China.

During the ninth century, however, Japan stopped sending embassies to the Chinese court. This brought to an end the period of feverish borrowing, and the civilization that grew up around the Heian court took on a uniquely Japanese character. Chinese culture was still admired and its influence remained strong, but it seemed that the Japanese felt that they had learned all they could from the continent and now wanted to set about assimilating what they had learned, and adapting it to suit their own particular brand of civilization.

By this time, the Chinese system of government which had been adopted in the seventh century was already something of a sham. In fact, it had never really worked. Although in theory the emperor directly con-



trolled all lands and people through a vast staff of officials, in practice the control of the central bureaucracy was never very effective and grew steadily weaker in the provinces. The degree of control from the central court remained strong, but this was exercised by members of the court aristocracy who had acquired large private estates in the provinces and who were influential as members of powerful noble families rather than as bureaucratic officials administering the public domain in the name of the emperor.

Even at court the real ruler was not the emperor but the head of the Fujiwara clan. Members of this clan were able to obtain for themselves all the positions of power so that the later centuries of the Heian period are sometimes called the Age of the Fujiwara. In contrast to the situation in China, the position of the emperor was never actually usurped, for his divine descent from the Sun Goddess made him sacrosanct. However, from this time until the nineteenth century, his position was never one of real power in Japan. He remained the emperor but became a figurehead, presiding over the yearly sacrifices to the gods to ensure good harvests and prosperity in the land and playing a leading rôle in sponsoring cultural activities. His political power was almost non-existent, save in the important respect that he was still regarded as the legitimate source of power and all those who exerted real power had at least to pay lip service to him, for in theory they exercised power in his name.

The civilization that developed at the Heian court is surely the most elegant and refined the world has ever known. Its golden age was during the tenth century, at which time there was a flowering of Japanese literature. This was brought about by the development of a Japanese system of writing called *kana*, which enabled people to express themselves more freely than in stilted Chinese. Some of the greatest prose works in the literature of the world were written in Japan at this time. Curiously enough, they were mostly written by women, probably because women were not allowed to take part in affairs of state and thus had an enormous amount of leisure time. The diaries and novels of these ladies give us a very vivid picture of life at the court. The most famous are the novel *The Tale of Genji*, by Murasaki Shikibu, and the diary, the *Pillow Book*, of Sei Shōnagon. Both these authoresses were ladies-in-waiting at court.

As with the court of the Sun King Louis XIV in France a few centuries later, life at court contrasted strongly with the life of the common people. Indeed, to the courtiers and their ladies, to venture beyond the capital was to leave civilization behind. Nor were the people of the Heian court much interested in the outside world. The influence of Chinese culture was still strong—official documents were still written in Chinese, the protocol of the court was modelled on that of the T'ang, and anything that came from China had much the same prestige as goods marked 'imported' in our own time. But nobody wanted to travel to China and, perhaps even more strange, people showed little interest in the great new civilization that was flowering there at this time under the Sung dynasty.

Life for the Heian aristocracy was very leisured, especially for the women who did not take part in the affairs of state. People spent their time, when not carrying on political intrigues or love affairs, composing poetry, performing on the lute or zither, and playing an enormous range of games and contests, such as dice games, *go* and a great variety of word games and poetry contests where people could show off their literary skills. Military valour and arms-bearing played no part in the life of the Heian courtiers. They rode horses, but only in racing; they practised the bow and arrow, but only for archery contests; and swords were used only in sword-dancing.

The aspect of Heian society which more than anything else characterizes it and makes it uniquely Japanese is the cult of beauty. Owing to the preceding centuries of eager borrowing from China, culture at the court had reached a remarkably high level. The dwellings of the Heian aristocracy



Court ladies on a picnic.



were filled with beautifully painted screens and objects such as ink-stands and quivers for holding arrows; musical instruments were made of lacquer or sandalwood and inlaid with mother-of-pearl. The art of dyeing textiles was also highly developed, and colour was particularly important in the dress of men and women at court. The men powdered their faces and used perfume; they dressed in baggy trousers and jackets and wore high, black lacquered headdresses. The court ladies wore up to twelve layers of flowing *kimono*, the colour of each layer of which was supposed to



Court costumes.

harmonize perfectly with the others. The importance of this is shown by the fact that Heian literature is filled with detailed descriptions of peoples' dress. In the following passage, the writer describes two people she sees journeying together, lit up by the moonlight streaming in through the rolled-up blinds of their carriage:

I could see a lady who was covered in about eight layers of light violet, red plum, white, and other robes; over this she wore a cloak of dark violet, which shone with a brilliant lustre. Next to her sat a gentleman with laced trousers of grape-coloured material with a heavily figured design; he wore several white robes, and at the opening of his sleeves one could see the yellow, rose and scarlet of his under-robes; he had undone the dazzlingly white sash of his court cloak which he wore off one shoulder so that one had a clear view of the robes underneath.<sup>1</sup>

In another story we read how a lady-in-waiting to the empress is stared and laughed at in court because she has made 'a small error in matching the colours at the openings of her sleeves'. The author goes on

<sup>1</sup> Morris, Ivan (tr.) *The Pillow Book of Sei Shōnagon*, p. 246.

to say that 'it was not really such a serious lapse of taste; only the colour of one of her robes was a shade too pale at the opening'.

The most important social grace for both men and women at the court was sensitivity to colour and beauty. In one of the diaries of the period, we read how shocked a group of court ladies are at some courtiers who are so busy playing a ball game that not only does their clothing become awry but also they neglect to admire the beauty of some falling blossoms nearby! Indeed, anyone, man or woman, who was not moved to tears by beauty, whether the loveliness of nature, a haunting melody or a graceful dance, was considered lacking in feeling, ill-bred, and 'countrified'.



Ox cart, method of transport of the court aristocracy.

The cult of beauty is also seen in the importance attached to calligraphy and the writing of poetry. Calligraphy was believed to mirror one's soul and nothing could damn a person more in other peoples' eyes than to be clumsy or inelegant with a writing brush.

Closely associated with the art of calligraphy was that of composing verse. Since ancient times, the Japanese had expressed their emotions in short verses of thirty syllables, known as *waka*. During the Heian period, verse-making reached a fine art and people composed poetry to mark every occasion, whether the birth of a new prince, a court ceremonial or the sound of a bird-call in spring. Not to be able to compose verse was as great a disgrace as to write badly or to be insensitive to beauty. We read of one suitor for a lady's hand who is rejected solely because he writes bad verses.

Exchange of verses also served as a kind of letter writing, especially between lovers. A great deal of care was taken in writing these poem-letters because everything about them was believed to reflect the writer's character. Not only was it important that the handwriting should be elegant and the



verse skilful, but even the paper on which the poem was written had to be of an appropriate thickness, colour and design. A sprig of blossom was always attached and was expected to harmonize with the emotion and imagery of the poem and the colour of the paper. Finally the paper was delicately perfumed and artistically folded.

Buddhism, Shintō, and Confucianism existed side by side at the Heian court and people saw nothing strange in following all three sets of beliefs at once, principally because they were not thought of as conflicting. Shintō rituals were concerned with prayers for good harvests and the cult of the Sun Goddess. Confucianism's main influence was in scholarship and teachings about the family, especially the virtue of filial piety. Buddhism, concerned mainly with the meaning of existence and death, was the dominant religion at the Heian court and its ideas influenced many aspects of court life. For example, the Buddhist ban on the taking of life meant that Heian courtiers did not go hunting or eat meat, and exile was preferred to execution as a punishment for crimes. People from the court often visited the many temples surrounding the capital to offer masses for deceased relatives or to go into retreat for a while themselves.

Above all, the Buddhist teaching of the impermanence of material things and the fleeting nature of the world provided an undercurrent to Heian society that was in sharp contrast to its emphasis on luxury and display. Often, after some elaborate court ceremonial, a courtier might be overcome with melancholy as he reflected on the transience of such worldly pomp. This feeling of melancholy, however, would be characterized by wistful acceptance rather than despair, as we can see in this poem written by Murasaki Shikibu.

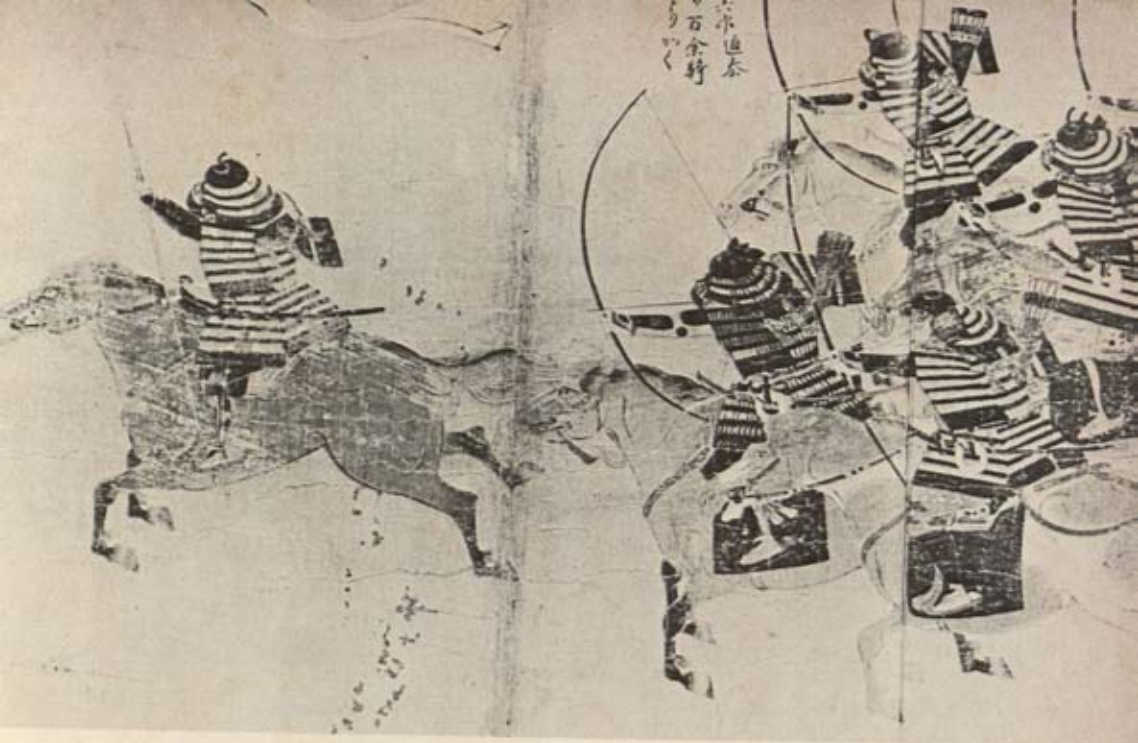
This world of ours—  
Why should we lament it?  
Let us view it as we do the cherries  
That blossom on the hills.<sup>2</sup>

The exquisitely sophisticated world of the Heian court lasted for almost four hundred years. After the tenth century, however, the court gradually lost control over the provinces, and powerful military clans grew up whose loyalty to the centre became less and less reliable. As the authority of the court grew weaker, it was forced to rely on the clans to restore order throughout the country and eventually even in the capital. In the mid-twelfth century the inevitable happened and the military clans took advantage of the court's weakness, and seized power for themselves.

#### THE WAY OF THE HORSE AND THE BOW

The fall of the Heian court meant not only the end of the rule of the court nobility but also the final abandonment of the pretence that Japan was

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Morris, Ivan *The World of the Shining Prince: Court Life in Ancient Japan*, O.U.P., London, 1964, p. 111.



Samurai charging into battle.

ruled by a centralized bureaucracy on the Chinese model. Japan now entered a period of feudalism which lasted for the next eight centuries, until she opened her doors to industrialization in the late nineteenth century. During the entire feudal period, the country was ruled by military governments in the name of the emperor.

The period from the late twelfth century to the end of the sixteenth century, usually known as mediaeval Japan, was a time of unrest and civil strife. The first military government was set up in 1192 at Kamakura under Minamoto Yoritomo, a chieftain of the great military house of Minamoto, after a long and bitter civil war in which he defeated the rival military house of Taira. Yoritomo called himself *shōgun* and his government set the pattern for feudal Japan. For the next hundred years the country was more or less at peace. After this time however, governments became less and less stable and the period came to its close with a century of almost continual civil war.

Under Yoritomo's government military clans replaced the Heian aristocracy as the new élite. Members of the military class were called *samurai* and these swashbuckling knights-at-arms dominated the stage of Japanese history until modern times.

There could be no greater contrast than that between the elegant and refined life of the Heian courtier and the way of life, known as 'the way of the horse and the bow', of the *samurai* of early mediaeval Japan. The *samurai*, like the courtier, was of high birth, but he lived in the



provinces far from the soft life of the capital. He was a warrior, dedicated to the arts of war. To the *samurai*, pastimes such as poetry and music made one weak and no better than a woman. He regarded arts such as sword-dancing as frivolous—if a *samurai* drew his sword, it was to kill a man. He spent his time practising military skills, for a *samurai* was expected to be an expert archer and swordsman and also a superb horseman. *Samurai* rode into battle on horseback, clad in armour, wearing two swords and carrying a large bow.

A *samurai* lived a spartan life, scorning any kind of luxury as a weakness. He dressed in cotton rather than silk and ate rough, unhulled rice. He was expected to be indifferent to hardship and never to show his emotions, even if suffering hunger or deep grief. Should he in any way besmirch his honour, he was expected to commit suicide by *seppuku*, or cutting open his own stomach.

The chief virtues of the *samurai* were loyalty to his lord, frugality in his way of life, and fearlessness. His supreme duty was to serve his lord, the head of his clan, and he asked nothing better than to die in his lord's defence. The symbol of the *samurai* was the cherry-blossom, the petals of which fall at the first breath of wind, just as the *samurai* gives up his life, without regret, for his lord. Another symbol of the *samurai* was his sword, which was thought of not merely as a weapon but as part of the *samurai* himself, its keen blade representing the *samurai's* honour.

As time went on, many members of the *samurai* class became influenced by the ways of the court, and they too took up aesthetic pursuits such as poetry and, from about the fifteenth century onwards, arts like flower arrangement and the tea ceremony. But the essential contrast between the life-style of the court noble, with its emphasis on worldly sophistication, and that of the *samurai*, with its fanatical ideal of 'dying without regret' for one's lord and its emphasis on martial virtues, always remained.

In some ways the *samurai* can be compared with the knight of mediaeval Europe. But there is one major difference between the two. In Europe, the influence of Christianity and, in particular, the cult of the Virgin Mary led to the growth of chivalry, and every knight wore his lady's colours on his sleeve as he rode into battle. In mediaeval Japan, however, women eventually lost the high position they had held during the Heian period. The increasing militarization of society after 1300, together with the growing influence of the Confucian teaching that women are inferior to men, meant that women came to be regarded as the weaker and less important members of society, and their chief function as the bearing of heirs to carry on the family name.

During the latter half of the mediaeval period, the central government lost its control over the provinces. Powerful warriors began bringing neighbouring lands under their control and holding sway over their fiefs as if





Left: procession of a feudal lord and his retainers along the Tokaido highway to Edo; right: Kūya Shōnin, a wandering Buddhist monk.

they were independent rulers. This was the origin of the *daimyōs*,\* or great feudal lords. The *daimyōs* built themselves magnificent castles, around which grew up castle towns which became centres of industry and commerce.

In 1467, there broke out a terrible civil war which meant the end of the last shreds of the government's power. For the next hundred years Japan knew nothing but civil strife and chaos as ambitious *daimyōs* fought among themselves to gain control of the country.

The society of mediaeval Japan was one torn by unrest and war between the great military houses. The governments that were set up never held power for long and rarely controlled the whole country. The Buddhist teaching about the preservation of life carried hardly any weight with these military men, who cared as little for the lives of their enemies as

\* In common with most specialists in things Japanese, the author in her original draft did not add -s to this word in the plural. It is a well known term and one might almost accept it as a loan-word in English. To avoid confusion I have added -s where the word is plural. *Samurai*, even better known than *daimyō*, should logically also have an -s, but *samurais* seems definitely strange even to the reader with little knowledge, while *daimyōs* does not. [Editor.]



they did about their own deaths. Execution grounds reappeared and blood flowed freely in times of peace as well as war.

One result of the constant turmoil and violent change was that the people turned more and more to Buddhism, with its promise of relief from the suffering of existence through faith and prayer. During the Heian period, Buddhism had been mainly a matter of elaborate rituals that had little appeal outside the sophisticated Heian court. Now new Buddhist sects appeared whose teachings were simple and easily understood even by the poor and uneducated. Buddhist monks set out on foot to the remote provinces of Japan to preach to the people. Many men, including the wealthy and powerful, became convinced of the vanity of power and glory and abandoned the world to become monks, following the Buddha's teaching in a life of poverty and meditation.

#### THE TOKUGAWA PEACE

The chaos caused by the civil wars that raged throughout Japan during the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries might well have caused people to lose hope that the land would ever know peace again. But, out of all the turbulence of warring *daimyōs* emerged three great generals, Oda Nobunaga (1534-82) Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-98) and Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616) who between them succeeded in unifying the country and founding a strong government that lasted for 250 years.

Nobunaga, a small *daimyō* of one of the central provinces, was a ruthless, ambitious man whose personal slogan was 'the whole country under one sword'. By dint of skilful military and political tactics he had almost succeeded in realizing this ambition when he was assassinated by one of his own men. Hideyoshi, a peasant's son who had risen to become one of Nobunaga's generals, continued the work of unification and conquered almost all the remaining hostile *daimyōs*. He ruled over the country for almost ten years (1590-98), then he died and it remained for Ieyasu, a former ally of both Nobunaga and Hideyoshi, to complete the work of unification and found a new government at Edo (present-day Tokyo) with himself as *shōgun*. The régime he founded is named after his own house, the house of Tokugawa. A saying which describes the rôle of the three famous men in the unification of Japan has it that Nobunaga prepared the rice-cake, Hideyoshi cooked it, and Ieyasu ate it.

In the mid-sixteenth century, as Nobunaga was just beginning his military campaigns, an event of international significance occurred. A Portuguese junk on its way to Macao was driven on to the shores of Japan off the coast of Kyushu. The traders on board were the first Europeans to set foot on Japanese soil. They began trading with the Japanese and were followed by Spanish traders from Manila. In 1549, the Portuguese Jesuit, Francis Xavier, came to Japan and he was followed by other Jesuit missionaries. The foreign traders and missionaries introduced into Japan

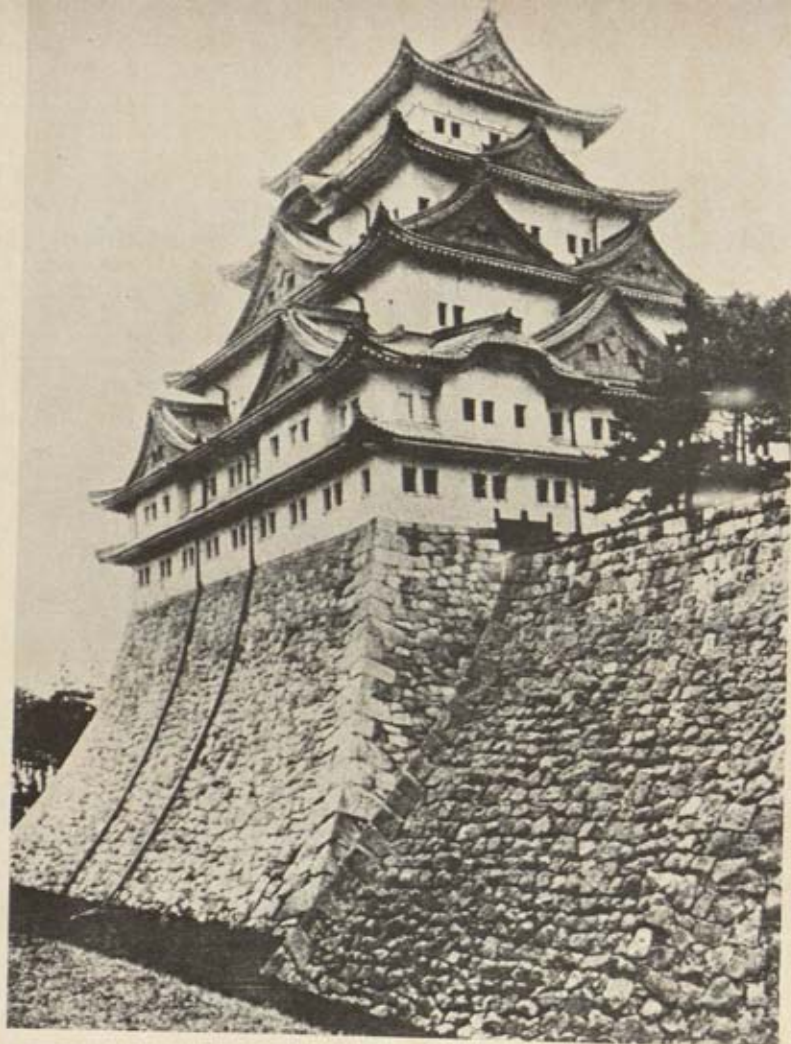


the Western solar calendar, maps of the world, knowledge of Western medicine, and many other items of Western culture, such as bread, sponge-cake, playing cards, and Aesop's Fables. But most important of all to Japan at the time was the introduction by the Portuguese traders of firearms, which played no small part in the success of the military campaigns of the three generals.

Once the Tokugawa government was established, its problem was how to preserve its control over the country without suffering the fate of all military governments before it for the previous four centuries. The policy it followed to maintain its power was to set up rigid control over all sections of the population in order to prevent any change in society that might threaten its authority. Hideyoshi had already carried out reforms to this effect, notably his famous 'sword hunt' in which the peasantry had been forced to hand over their weapons on the pious pretext that they were to be melted down and used in the construction of a great statue of the Buddha. Society was divided into four social classes, *samurai*, peasant, artisan and merchant. The last three classes together made up the common people and a strict division was drawn between them and the *samurai* class. In this way, the Tokugawa rulers hoped to preserve the dominance of the military class and, as a sign of their superior status, it was forbidden for any member of society, other than *samurai*, to wear the two swords, one long and one short, which were traditionally part of the *samurai* dress. Each social class had its own rules of conduct. Strict watch was kept over the population, permission was required to change one's residence, and passes were required for travel. Buddhist temples were used by the government to serve a kind of police function, for all births, death, marriages, changes of abode and journeys had to be registered at the local temple. In order to ensure that all these new laws and regulations were followed, the government set up a network of spies and informers throughout the country and any breaking of the law was reported by them and severely punished.

As with all earlier military governments, the emperor and his court remained at Kyoto and lip service was paid to him as the ruler. But real power was held by the *shōgun*, the head of the Tokugawa government. The administration was a curious mixture of feudalism and bureaucracy. The Tokugawa house controlled almost one-quarter of the agricultural land of the country and it was from the revenue of this that its wealth was derived. A large body of *samurai* officials collected the taxes for the government and administered these lands. The rest of the land, apart from some portions set aside for the Kyoto court and the Buddhist church, was divided into hereditary fiefs held by the *daimyōs*. Each *daimyō* lived in a great castle, built of wood and tiles and encircled by a great stone wall, surrounded by the houses of his *samurai* retainers in a castle town in the centre of his fief. The fiefs were controlled in much the same way as the territories of the Tokugawa government, *samurai* officials collecting the





Nagoya castle.

taxes and administering the peasant villages of the fief. Because of the class distinction drawn between *samurai* and peasant, *samurai* were no longer allowed to own land or farm it. They became retainers of the *daimyōs* or the Tokugawa government. Most of them were paid stipends, and lived either in Edo or one of the castle towns.

Since the revenue of the ruling military class, whether the government itself or the *daimyōs* and their retainers, depended so heavily on the taxation of the produce of the peasantry, great emphasis was placed on the improvement of agriculture. Better tools were introduced, new fertilizers were used and double-cropping was practised. The peasants themselves were exhorted to be industrious and thrifty and one law enjoined them to rise early, work at night, eat only coarse grains, and abstain from tea and tobacco.

Although the *samurai* were the most privileged class, they too were subjected to strict rules. The Tokugawa rulers were especially afraid that the great feudal lords, the *daimyōs*, might become too powerful and plot against the government. To prevent this possibility, they forbade the *daimyōs* to erect new castles, coin money, or construct warships. Furthermore, every *daimyō* was ordered to reside for every other year at the Tokugawa capital, Edo, and, when he returned to his fief, to leave his wife and children in Edo as hostages. The expense involved in maintaining two establishments and the long journeys to and from the capital ensured that the *daimyōs* were kept too poor to foment rebellion. This rule also provided the populace with colourful spectacles as the various great lords, seated in palanquins, wended their way in a cavalcade of retainers along the great highways of Japan leading to the capital.

Buddhism remained strong among the common people, but Confucianism became the official ideology of the state and the chief philosophy of the *samurai* class. The Tokugawa rulers saw in Confucianism the justification of their strong control over the country. The founder of the Tokugawa government, Ieyasu, strongly influenced by Confucianism, had laid down as a principle of government that the state should nourish and care for the people as it would an infant, and it was on this Confucian idea of a benevolent government that the philosophy of the state was based. In practice it meant that officials, although they were expected to rule the people well, had a great deal of power, and no tradition of free thought among the common people was allowed to arise. This, however, did not prevent the development of diverse intellectual traditions among the officials themselves and other privileged groups.

Shortly after Ieyasu's death, the Tokugawa government took a step of great consequence. In 1639, it declared a policy of 'closed country', to seal Japan off from the outside world. No Japanese was allowed to leave Japan and no foreigner was allowed to enter the country. The motive behind this extraordinary step was the suppression of Christianity. Nobunaga had been friendly toward the Christian missionaries and at first Hideyoshi had followed the same policy. But later, Hideyoshi began to distrust them and fear that they might stir up rebellion among the people by their foreign doctrines. Hideyoshi therefore ordered all foreign missionaries to leave the country and the people to repudiate Christianity. However, missionaries smuggled themselves back into Japan and Christian converts refused to give up their faith. During the time of Ieyasu's successor a series of violent persecutions of Christians was begun. Many Japanese converts resisted heroically and finally the government decided that the only way to suppress Christianity in Japan was by cutting off the country from the outside world. Missionaries were barred from entering Japan and the only Europeans allowed in the country were a small group of Protestant Dutch merchants who wanted only to trade and brought no missionaries with them. These few Dutch merchants, who were restricted to the small island of Deshima





Shop of a salt merchant.

off the coast of the port of Nagasaki, were the only contact Japan had with the Western world for the next two centuries—a period which in Europe began during the Renaissance and ended with the Industrial Revolution.

For the next two hundred years Japan was at peace, industry and commerce flourished, and the government remained in power. Shut off from the outside world, it might have seemed that the Tokugawa government had achieved its ideal of a well-ordered, unchanging society.

But, despite the determination of the government, changes did occur. They were finally to bring about an end of Japanese feudalism and prepare Japan for its rôle in the modern world. The two main causes of these changes were the growing power of the merchant class in the towns and the spread of education.

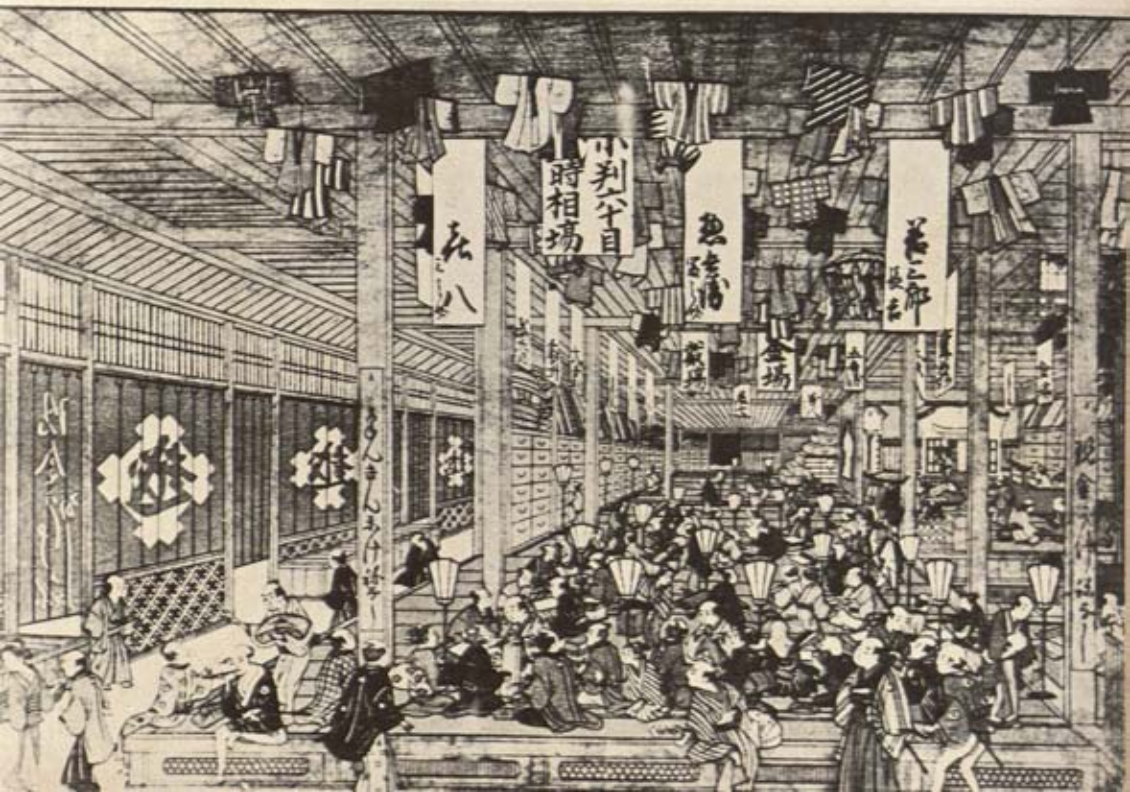
Although the merchant class officially ranked lowest in the social scale, it was the growing prosperity of this class which was one of the chief causes of the breakdown of the feudal order the Tokugawa hoped to



maintain. Trade and commerce had already developed considerably in the sixteenth century in the castle towns of the *daimyōs*. During the long period of peace under the Tokugawa, the economic power of the merchant class rose steadily. On the other hand, the wealth of the *daimyōs* and *samurai* gradually declined. Since the *daimyōs* were forbidden to mint coins, they were dependent on merchant brokers to convert the revenue of their lands, which were collected in kind, into cash to cover the expenses involved in their journeys to the capital and in the many forms of luxurious display which were expected of them. Often their revenue was not adequate and they were forced to borrow from wealthy merchants. The *samurai* were in an even worse financial position since their only source of revenue was their stipends, which the *daimyōs* often cut in order to save their own expenses. It became increasingly common for an impoverished *samurai* to adopt the son of a rich merchant for his heir in order to better himself. The result of this was that the social barriers which the government wished to maintain between classes became more and more a dead letter.

The importance of the merchant class in Tokugawa times is reflected in the culture of the period. Just as the literature of Heian had centred on the court aristocracy and that of mediaeval Japan on the warrior, the great plays, dramas and novels of the Tokugawa period have as their themes the life of the merchant class. Osaka was the most thriving commercial centre of the time and, together with Kyoto, it was also the cultural centre. Perhaps the most famous artistic achievement of the period was the

Famous draper's shop in Edo.







Writing class in Tokugawa times.

development of the colour print, a world-famous art form which also provides us with splendid illustrations of the gay life of the townspeople.

The spread of education in Tokugawa Japan was unparalleled in any other society in the world at the time. The *samurai* especially turned their attention to education for, with the long period of peace, military skills alone were of little use to them. Since the main function of the *samurai* was now to serve as administrators in the service of the Tokugawa government or the *daimyōs*, the government encouraged them to study the Confucian classics, for Confucian education was based on morality and designed to make men more virtuous and therefore better administrators. All over the country, fief schools for the children of *samurai* sprang up in which were taught the Chinese classics as well as military arts. Even girls of the *samurai* class received some education, although it was always given at home and confined to subjects considered suitable for women.

The Tokugawa period also saw a spectacular growth of literacy among the common people, especially in the towns. This was brought about largely by the development of printing from wood blocks which made books cheap and easily available to all. Numerous schools for the children of commoners were established, attended by girls as well as boys, where the children were taught to read, write and count. The literacy rate compared favourably



with that of European countries of the time. One authority on the subject estimates that, at the end of the Tokugawa period, 43 per cent of boys and 10 per cent of girls in Japan were receiving formal education outside the home. He compares this with the results of a British survey in 1837 which found that, in the major industrial towns of England, less than 25 per cent of children went to school.<sup>3</sup>

Although the Tokugawa government encouraged the study of the Confucian classics for the *samurai* class, people soon became dissatisfied with the rather theoretical nature of Confucian education. In 1716, a Tokugawa ruler relaxed the ban on contact with foreign countries enough to allow works in Western languages into the country, provided that such books did not deal with Christianity. Many scientific and medical works, usually in Dutch, came into Japan and a small but influential group of scholars grew up who were eager to learn about the scientific developments in the West. Another important tendency that was to produce far-reaching results was that many scholars, both *samurai* and plebeian, began to study the Japanese classics as well as the Chinese. The study of ancient Shintō legends convinced them that they owed their first loyalty not to the Tokugawa government but to the emperor. These growing pressures from the *samurai* class, together with developments in trade and industry, began slowly to undermine the feudal structure of Japan.

In 1853, when the American Commodore Perry arrived at the head of his fleet of 'black ships' to give Japan the alternative of either opening her doors to peaceful trade with the outside world or having them forced open, he found a society ready for change. The Tokugawa feudal rulers had no alternative but to open Japan's doors, not only to foreign trade but also to internal reforms. The emperor was reinstated, after more than ten centuries of political insignificance, as the sovereign of Japan in fact as well as in name. Taking the title of the Emperor Meiji, he headed a new government which began introducing reforms to industrialize and modernize Japan.

#### THE RISE OF A MODERN STATE

In the years following the overthrow of feudalism in Japan, the government set about introducing widespread political and economic reforms. As in the days of the great Reform of Taika, students flocked overseas to study the administration and organization of countries more advanced than their own—only this time it was not to China, then 'the sick man of Asia', that they went but to America, Britain, France, and Germany. For the next few decades, Japan eagerly absorbed all she could from the industrialized countries of the West and, on the basis of what she learned from them, set about re-organizing her government, army, educational system and economy.

<sup>3</sup> Dore, R. P., *Education in Tokugawa Japan*, pp. 291, 321.





Japan's first railroad which opened in 1872 and ran from Tokyo to Yokohama.

This modernization of Japan was brought about by a 'revolution' from above, guided and controlled by a handful of statesmen, the 'Meiji oligarchs'. Although contact with Western countries introduced the concept of 'people's rights', it was to be a long time before democracy was to replace in Japan the long-standing tradition of authoritarian rule. One of the great struggles of the first decades following the Restoration was the battle for the establishment of political parties and a voice of the people in government. In 1889 a constitution was promulgated which provided for the setting up of a bicameral parliament (the Diet). However, the concessions to democracy were small. The franchise was at first limited to little more than one per cent of the population—males over twenty-five who paid more than a certain amount in tax—and it was made clear that the main-spring of the Japanese state was still to be the imperial house, with its sacred emperors descended in an unbroken line from the Sun Goddess. The Constitution was presented to the people by the emperor as his gracious gift, rather than as something that was theirs by right. The power of the new parliament was also limited—ministers of state were responsible to the emperor, not to parliament, and the army and navy remained under direct imperial command instead of being answerable to the civil administration.

The following year an Imperial Rescript on Education was issued which laid down the moral, patriotic, and civil principles on which education in Japan was to be based. It stressed the importance of filial piety and urged students always to respect the Constitution and observe the laws. 'Should emergency arise', it went on, 'offer yourselves courageously to the State; and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of Our Imperial Throne coeval with heaven and earth.' The influence of the



Rescript on the Japanese people was enormous—a copy was kept together with the emperor's portrait in every school, where they were held in great awe and reverence.

By the end of the nineteenth century, Japan's development as a modern state, patterned as it was after those of Europe, was leading her on the same path of imperialist expansion. The European powers at this time were engaged in a mad scramble to carve out colonial domains in Africa, Asia, and Oceania. In 1894 Japan fought a successful war with China over control of Korea, and in 1905 she went to war with Russia to prevent Russian penetration of Korea, and was again victorious. In 1915 she had become powerful enough to present China with the famous 'Twenty-one Demands'—which would have turned China into a virtual colony of Japan. The Chinese Republican government managed to resist the more extreme of the demands, but nevertheless Japan obtained valuable economic concessions in China. The First World War gave Japan an excellent opportunity to extend her empire—as an ally of Britain, she declared war on Germany and set about picking up the German colonies in the East. In 1919, only fifty years after Restoration, Japan went to the Treaty of Versailles as one of the great military and industrial powers of the world and received recognition as one of the 'Big Five' of the new international order.

The First World War also gave tremendous impetus to commercial and industrial expansion in Japan, and after it was over the business classes, particularly the great commercial and industrial interests, became

Japanese invasion of Liaotung peninsula, North China, in 1894.





increasingly important in Japanese life and politics. By the early 1920's the old oligarchy had almost disappeared. Emperor Meiji died in 1912 and was succeeded by his mentally retarded son, and by 1924 only one of the 'elder statesmen' was still living. The dominance of business, and therefore of civil, interests in government led to a shift of emphasis from military conquest to economic expansion. At the Washington Conference in 1921 Japan agreed to limit her naval establishment and she also recognized China's territorial integrity. In the same year the Japanese government agreed to withdraw all her military forces from north China. This period in Japan is often called the 'liberal 'twenties', because of the emergence among the middle classes of the cities of progressive social concepts. One historian writes of this time that

Family solidarity, paternal authority, and male dominance remained the salient features of Japanese society, but increasingly the younger generation in the cities joined the world-wide revolt of youth and began to question time-honoured social customs. College students, attracted to liberal or radical political philosophies, embraced the freer social concepts of the West, and there was a growing demand on the part of youth to be allowed to make marriages of love rather than marriages arranged by families through go-betweens. Women office-workers became a feature of the new social system, and under occidental influence, many middle class Japanese men began to treat their wives almost as social equals . . . .<sup>4</sup>

Such modern ideas were, however, confined to very limited circles. The vast majority of people remained more influenced by traditional and conservative values as set forth in the Imperial Rescript on Education, and viewed these new trends as a threat to traditional and social authority. Even the less conservative business classes saw the new trends as dangerous because of the interest of many students in Marxism. In 1925 the Diet adopted universal manhood suffrage, yet, in the same year as this progressive step was taken, it also passed a Peace Preservation Law which severely limited the rights of free speech and political action. Under this law the police were given extensive powers to stamp out 'dangerous thoughts'. Anyone with radical tendencies was in danger of victimization, and the embryo communist movement was crushed.

The inter-war years in Japan thus witnessed a growth of liberalism and, at the same time, a resurgence of conservatism and reaction. It was the latter trend which was to become stronger and eventually crush all liberal and democratic tendencies completely, as Japanese militarism gained control in the 'thirties. The worldwide economic depression did a great deal to aggravate anti-liberal tendencies. The shrinkage in overseas markets

<sup>4</sup> Reischauer, Edwin O., *Japan, Past and Present*, G. Duckworth, London (3rd ed.) 1964, p. 154.



and the raising of tariff barriers by the Western powers rendered Japan's economic position extremely insecure. People began to lose faith in parliamentary politics, and ultra-nationalist societies, which supported authoritarian rule at home and military expansion into Asia as the only way to secure reliable markets, gained increasing support.

In 1931 Japanese army units stationed in Manchuria to protect Japanese interests there, without the consent or knowledge of the civil government, seized Mukden and proceeded to overrun all Manchuria. At home, the government tried to control the army, but a series of assassinations, including that of the Premier, carried out by ultra-nationalist groups effectively put an end to party cabinets and the military became the most powerful force in the government. In 1932 the Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo was set up in former Manchuria. The League of Nations issued a protest at Japan's actions in Manchuria, upon which Japan left the League. The only effect of the condemnation was to further the growing resentment in Japan against the West—a resentment whose roots went back to factors such as Japan's failure to have inserted into the Covenant of the League of Nations the principle of racial equality, America's restrictions on Japanese immigration and, since the Depression, the 'economic strangulation' imposed on Japan by the Western nations' restrictions on trade. With the growth of anti-Western feeling, ultra-nationalist ideals grew even stronger in Japan and the propagation, especially in schools, of Shintō mythology and fanatical devotion to the State became more and more intense. Government leaders began to speak of Japan's mission to become the leader of Asia and free it from the domination of the Western colonial powers. In 1937 Japanese troops invaded north China, claiming that their aim was to 'prevent Asia from becoming another Africa and to preserve China from communism'. By this time the Western democratic powers were themselves concerned about preventing the spread of communism and, seeing Japanese penetration of East Asia as a bulwark against Bolshevik Russia, made no move to protest against Japanese aggression in China until war finally broke out in Europe, and Japan, as the ally of Germany, became their enemy. When the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in 1941, the United States was drawn into the war against the Axis powers.

At the height of its success, the Japanese Imperial Army overran a vast area of Asia which included the eastern half of China, South-east Asia, the Philippines and many Pacific islands.

Japan's dream of becoming the 'leader of Asia' and establishing a 'Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere' was doomed to failure because the people of these regions resented foreign domination by an Asian power at least as much as they had resented Western rule, and frequent acts of Japanese cruelty towards the civilian populations made them feared and hated. The star of the Japanese Empire waned as quickly as it had risen, and by 1945 the Imperial Army was scattered. Early in 1945, American



marines, after heavy fighting, took possession of Okinawa—the first time in history that Japanese territory had been occupied by foreign troops—and it seemed that soon troops would land in Japan itself. The Japanese people prepared to die to the last man, woman and child in defence of their homeland. At the same time, realizing that defeat was inevitable, the Japanese leaders began making overtures to Moscow to act as mediator in a peace settlement. The Russians hedged and, while negotiations were still proceeding, on 6 August 1945 America, wishing to bring a speedy end to the war, dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima. On 8 August Russia declared war on Japan and the following day America dropped another atomic bomb, this time on Nagasaki. Since it was already clear that Japan had no choice other than unconditional surrender, the dropping of the second bomb seems to have been largely to ensure that American troops would reach Japan before the Russians for, even as the Second World War was ending, the Cold War had already begun. On 15 August the Emperor made an unprecedented broadcast throughout Japan, urging the people to 'pave the way for a grand peace for all generations to come' by 'enduring the unendurable and suffering what is insufferable'. The war against Japan was over.

#### POST-WAR JAPAN

The American occupation was headed by General Macarthur and under his direction the occupying army set about introducing democratic reforms into Japan. Land reform was undertaken, long-imprisoned political prisoners were released, ultra-reactionary officials were purged, restrictions on trade union activity were lifted, and women were given the vote. In the schools the old textbooks which began the teaching of Japanese history with the Age of the Gods and the legend of the Sun Goddess were abolished, and new history textbooks were written which began, more scientifically, with the Stone Age. In 1947 a new Constitution was proclaimed which declared that parliament was to be the highest organ of state power and that, although the emperor would remain as a symbol of the unity of the people, he would no longer be considered divine. In a unique clause in the Constitution, Article Nine, Japan renounced the use of war and denied itself the right to maintain any armed forces.

The Japanese people, who felt that they and their Emperor had been betrayed by the military leaders, welcomed the reforms. After the horrors they had experienced in the two atom bomb attacks on densely populated cities and the incendiary bombing of Tokyo, they welcomed the pacifist clause in the Constitution and looked forward to Japan becoming the 'Switzerland of the Pacific'. However, within a few years, with the development of the Cold War following the communist victory in China in 1949 and the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, the occupation policy in



Japan changed and stress began to be laid on rebuilding Japan as an ally of the United States in the struggle against communism. Despite Article Nine, America began encouraging Japan to rearm. In 1950 the Japanese government, with American approval, created Self Defence Forces which before long were developed into a well-equipped modern army, and a navy and air force were also created. In 1953, Vice-President Nixon, at an official banquet, declared that his country had been wrong to insist on the 'no war clause' being written into the Constitution. In recent years, Japanese defence expenditure has increased considerably and some Japanese and American leaders have stated openly that they favour Japan's 'going nuclear'. The prospect of the remilitarization of Japan is viewed with dismay by many people, who want no repetition of the black years of the Second World War.

The occupation came to an end in 1951 with the drawing up of the United States-Japan Joint Security Treaty. Under the terms of the treaty, American bases remained in Japan as a defence against outside attack. Japan, in fact, became very important strategically in the United States' military planning in the Far East. Okinawa particularly, which was not restored to Japan but remained under American occupation, became the strategic centre of a complex network of American military bases. Although the presence of these relieved Japan of a great deal of expenditure on defence and thus released money for economic development—a factor in Japan's 'economic miracle' of the post-war years—it has also meant that Japan became deeply involved in American foreign policy. A case in point is the war in Vietnam. Okinawa and Japan served as vital bases and supply centres for American military operations, although the majority of the Japanese people did not support American intervention. Much of the student unrest in Japan has been over the question of the renewal of the Security Treaty, the removal of American bases from Japan, and the return of Okinawa. Okinawa was finally returned to Japan, in 1971, but the terms of its return have done little to quell the unrest since American bases are still to remain there on the same terms as they do in Japan proper.

The 'economic miracle' of her post-war growth has made Japan into the world's third greatest industrial power, with a standard of living that is among the highest in the world. It has also brought with it many problems. The tremendous pressure of economic growth urges expansion abroad, making many people in Asia suspicious of Japan's intentions, while, at the same time, it increases domestic tensions—for example, Japan's pollution problem is surpassed only in the United States.

The recent changes in the world situation—notably the decline of American influence in Asia and the deepening hostility between China and the Soviet Union—have brought about some dramatic shifts in Japan's foreign policy. In September 1972, the new head of government, Premier Tanaka, visited the People's Republic of China and, shortly afterwards,



diplomatic relations were established between the two countries. Japan is also anxious to improve its relations with Moscow, especially since it sees advantages in having access to the oil resources of Siberia. Japan's problem now lies in trying to befriend each power without offending the other—a task which may prove extremely difficult.

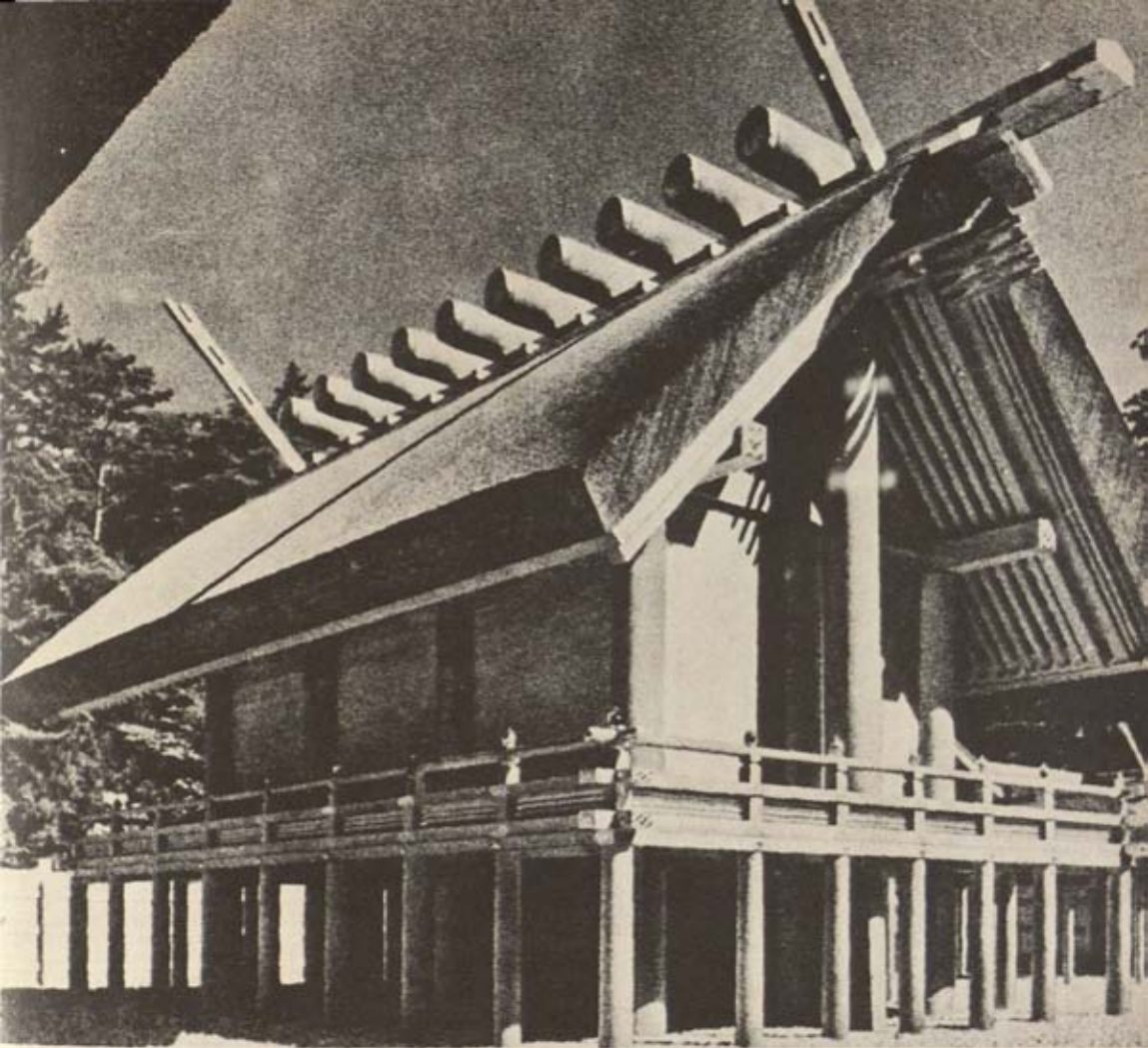
#### JAPANESE BELIEFS

Shintō, Buddhism, and Confucianism are the three traditional systems of belief in Japan, and the Japanese do not see anything strange in following all three at once. There have been no religious wars in Japanese history and no heresy trials, and most clashes in which religion has been involved have had political origins. In present-day Japan a person worships at the local Shintō shrine as a member of the community under the protection of the *kami* of the shrine, and prays for good health and prosperity for the neighbourhood. The same person takes part with all members of his family in the Buddhist burial and memorial services for deceased relatives and ancestors. In the ordering of his family and personal conduct he may be strongly influenced by traditional Confucian teachings.

Christianity is also a significant force in Japan today, although the number of its adherents is not large. An indication of the place of religion in Japanese life is the difficulty Christianity encounters by demanding that its followers give up all other beliefs. This creates great social problems for an individual Japanese, for if a person does not join in the worship at the local shrine he puts himself apart from the community and if he does not take part in the Buddhist memorial services for deceased relatives and ancestors he cuts himself off from his family.

All religions in Japan today face the same challenge—the growth of scientific knowledge and materialism which go hand in hand with modern living. As in all other industrialized countries of the world, increasing numbers of people in Japan have come to regard all religious beliefs as old-fashioned superstitions. On the other hand, some Japanese religious sects still gain much popular support and Zen Buddhist mysticism is making a considerable impression on some intellectual circles of the Western world.

*Shintō.* Shintō is the native faith of Japan for, unlike Buddhism and Christianity, it was not imported from a foreign country. Shintō began in prehistoric times as a primitive nature worship. It has no founder and its doctrines and religious practices differ throughout the country. It has undergone changes and development since the early centuries A.D. but it has retained many of its ancient characteristics. Shintō has never been much concerned with an after-life but rather has concentrated on the present world, chiefly in order to achieve such blessings as abundant harvests and good fortune.



The Ise Shrine, dedicated to the Sun Goddess.

In Japan today each hamlet has at least one Shintō shrine. The *kami* to whom the shrine is dedicated extends his protection over the area and all the people within it, not only those who live there permanently but also anyone passing through. There are also shrines which protect larger areas—shrines of the province, regional shrines, and even national shrines which protect the whole nation. The most important national shrine is that at Ise dedicated to the Sun Goddess, which symbolizes the nation.

*Kami* are not usually thought of as having bodily shape, unlike the Buddhist figures and saints. Inside each shrine, however, there may be a 'sacred object' (*shintai*) such as a stone, a mirror or a piece of bronze, which is believed to be the 'lodging place' of the *kami* when he is present at the shrine.



Temples are laid out along a central axis. At the entrance to the shrine there is a decorative gate, called a *torii*. One enters through the *torii* and proceeds towards the main building, passing through more *torii* on the way if it is a large one. The main building is the most sacred spot in the shrine grounds, for here the 'sacred object' is housed. It is usually a plain wooden building, with the long crossed beams on the roof which, since early times, have been a decorative feature of Shintō temples. People do not enter this building but stand outside it to make their offerings and to hear the shrine guardian recite prayers. He wears white robes in the style of ancient court dress. In larger temples, there is a wooden platform in front of the shrine, where offerings are placed and where dances are performed at festival times.

The axis of the shrine points to the real sacred point of worship to which the shrine is dedicated. This may be a mountain peak, a grove of trees, a waterfall or some other landmark. It is here that the *kami* dwells and it is from here that his protection spreads out over the locality, guarding the people, the passers-by, the animals, the birds, the trees and the crops.



Shintō *torii*.

Shintō ceremonies can be performed with or without worshippers being present. There are no weekly congregational services equivalent to Christian Sunday services in either Shintō or Buddhism. One member of a household, usually the head of the house, can represent the whole family at shrine ceremonies and the whole family receives as much benefit as if they had all been there in person.

Shintō ceremonies are designed to channel the spiritual force that flows from the shrine out over the area it protects and to purify all the members of the community. The ceremonies are therefore mainly concerned with promoting harmony with nature. People pray for the fertility of the soil, the ripening of the crops and freedom from natural disasters. The shrine also has charge of marriages and children's age-grade ceremonies. Burial services, on the other hand, are almost exclusively left to the Buddhist

temples, because of the traditional Shintō belief that death and disease are polluting.

Food is an important element in Shintō ceremonies. By sharing in dedicated food or rice-wine, people achieve a mystical link with the spirit of the shrine and with all the members of the community who take part in the ritual, whether in person or represented by a member of their family.

New-born babies are always presented at the shrine as soon as the mother's period of ritual defilement following childbirth is over. The mother presents her child to the *kami* of the shrine and begs his protection for it. At the ages of three and a half, five, and seven years, children are taken to the shrine again, for at each of these ages they enter a new age-grade. A bride is also presented at the shrine of her new locality just before the actual wedding ceremony at the house of her husband's family, where the couple's ritual eating and drinking together in public make them man and wife.

Although the *kami* of the locality are the most important from the point of view of the whole community, especially in country areas, there are also many other kinds of *kami*, some of which are worshipped only in certain provinces. One of the best known is Inari-sama, the Shintō rice god, who is traditionally depicted as a fox, a lucky animal in Japan. People pray at Inari shrines for prosperity and good fortune in business and trade.

Another variety of *kami* is the household *kami*. Many houses have a *kamidana* or 'god-shelf' above the doorway of the entrance lobby. On the shelf are placed an incense bowl and another small bowl for offerings which a member of the house makes each day to the *kami* to ask for protection. Here also are kept the *fuda*, strips of bamboo or paper bearing the name of the *kami* of the shrine from which the *fuda* has been bought. They symbolize the protection of the *kami* over the household. In the kitchen there may be another small shelf with ritual decorations dedicated to the *kami* who watches over the kitchen, where the household food is prepared. Offerings are also often made to the *kami* of the household water supply, who protects it from impurity.

Modern education and the increase of scientific knowledge in recent times have affected Shintō greatly, especially in the cities, where many people now regard Shintō beliefs as superstitions. Another major reason for the decline in Shintō beliefs is the close association of Shintō with Japanese militarism in the 1930's and the Second World War. At that time the Japanese people were taught that, as inhabitants of the 'land of the gods', they had a divine mission to spread Japanese culture to the rest of the world and that they could never be defeated because of the protection of the Sun Goddess. After the war many people found Shintō distasteful because of these associations.

Today Shintō has its strongest hold in the countryside, where its close connection with agriculture makes it part of everyday life. In both city and



country, however, many people still keep up Shintō observances, some out of genuine belief, some out of habit, and some because worshipping at the same shrine is the traditional way of cementing community ties.

*Buddhism.* Buddhism in Japan today has lost much of the emphasis it laid in mediaeval times on the suffering of existence and the illusory nature of earthly reality. Its traditional rôle of the care of the dead, however, has



Buddhist pagoda.

remained. Some modern sects of Buddhism concern themselves with social work and run hospitals, kindergartens, and homes for the aged; others apply themselves to politics, such as the famous Sōkagakkai movement. Generally speaking, however, the chief rôle of Buddhism in Japan today is the burial of the dead and the rites for the veneration of ancestors. In this way Buddhism is a strong force uniting the family, for the gathering of family members around the tablets of the ancestors to perform memorial services for them symbolizes the unity of the family, which stretches back into the past as well as including all the members living in the present.

Buddhism is divided into a number of sects, some of which are very ancient and others of recent origin. All Buddhist temples are attached to the main temple of the sect. This contrasts with Shintō shrines, which have no connection other than with the locality they protect. Whereas every hamlet has a shrine, many are without a temple. On the other hand, some hamlets may have two temples, each belonging to a different sect. People visit the temple of their own sect—which may not always be the closest geographically—and rely on the priest there to perform the services for the deceased members of their family. The choice of a sect is not usually a matter of doctrine or of individual conviction. Rather it depends on which temple has always performed the services for the dead in a particular family and so become the 'family' temple.

The architecture and layout of Buddhist temples differ sharply from those of shrines. There are no long crossbeams on the eaves of the main hall and, although there is usually a decorative gateway to the temple grounds, *torii* are never found. The buildings do not lie along a central axis but are clustered around the main hall where the central altar is situated. Behind the altar is a large image or images of the Buddha. Unlike a shrine, a temple contains many statues of the Buddha and of various bodhisattvas. People enter the main hall of the temple and worship by burning candles and incense before the main altar, rubbing Buddhist rosaries wrapped around one hand as they recite passages from the Buddhist scriptures (*sūtras*). There are no regular congregational services as in Christian churches. One or more priests live at the temple in one of the buildings around the main hall and carry out rituals in the main hall at certain hours of the day. In this way temples resemble Christian monasteries rather than parish churches. Within the temple grounds there is always a cemetery.

Apart from the worship in the temples carried out by the priests, Buddhist worship is usually performed in the home, and centres around the *butsudan* (altar of the Buddhas). This is a small cupboard with a double door, sometimes elaborately decorated but often just a plain wooden box. In the *butsudan* are kept the tablets of the ancestors. When a member of the family dies, the priest bestows on him a posthumous name, supposedly indicating his noble character, and this name is written on a tablet which is placed in the *butsudan*. Distant ancestors are represented on single tablets inscribed with the words 'ancestors of the *x* generation'.

The *butsudan* containing the ancestral tablets is usually kept only at the house of the main branch of the family, where the head of the house or his wife cares for it and places fresh offerings of rice and water or tea before the tablets every day. Often, if the family has bought a particular delicacy, a small portion of it is placed in the *butsudan* before the family eats. At a wedding, the doors of the *butsudan* are opened so that the ancestors can share in the festivities. Recently deceased ancestors especially are thought to be still with the family, sharing in its life. Remote ancestors are more likely to be regarded with veneration. Their descendants pray to them for guidance and protection. Children are taught to feel gratitude towards their ancestors and it is considered very shameful to offend them by bringing dishonour on the family.

Among the Buddhist ceremonies which take place in the home, the most common are the anniversary services of the dead. These are performed on the forty-ninth day following the death of a family member and thereafter in the first, third, fifth, seventh, thirteenth, twenty-fifth, and fiftieth years (many people stop after the thirteenth year). After the fiftieth anniversary, the tablet bearing the individual name of a deceased ancestor is removed and he is represented by the one tablet for all the members of



his generation. As well as anniversary services for recently deceased ancestors, there are services for all the ancestors collectively. These are performed especially at New Year, at the festivals of the equinox in spring and autumn, and at the Lantern Festival in midsummer.

On the occasion of an anniversary service, representatives from different branches of the family come to the main house where the ancestral tablets are kept. The tablet of the ancestor whose anniversary it is, or all the tablets if it is a general anniversary service, is taken from the *butsudan*



Name tablets and offerings set in the *tokonoma* during Bon festival.

and placed in the *tokonoma*,<sup>5</sup> which is specially decorated for the occasion. An incense bowl is set in front of the tablet and below it are placed tiny dishes containing offerings of food. The *tatami*<sup>6</sup> is swept clean and on it, near the *tokonoma*, are placed a Buddhist rosary, a large bowl for burning incense and a wooden sounding board. The priest comes to the house and reads *sūtras* before the tablet. Then the guests all eat a simple meal of 'abstinence food' which includes no salt, meat, fish or wine. After the meal everybody goes to the cemetery to leave offerings of food at the graves.

One of the most popular Buddhist festivals is Bon, the Feast of the Lanterns, which takes place in midsummer. At that time the spirits of the ancestors are believed to live with the family for three days as its spiritual guests. At Bon the ancestral tablets are placed in the *tokonoma*, and people

<sup>5</sup> For definition of these words, see Index.

put on their best clothes and visit their neighbours. Married daughters and other close relatives come to visit their family. Some people go to the cemetery and place offerings on the graves. On the last night of the festival, the ceremony of the straw boats takes place. The offerings in the *tokonoma*



Bon ceremony.

are put into small boat-shaped baskets made of rice straw. In these the ancestors are supposed to take their departure. At midnight the boats are burnt in a large bonfire. In many places the young people perform traditional Bon dances on this last night.

*Confucianism and the Family.* Confucianism is not a religion but a system of morals which teaches men how to regulate all spheres of life from the government of their country to the ordering of their family and personal conduct. According to Confucian teaching, if all aspects of life are ordered correctly, then the order and harmony of heaven will be reflected on earth. Ideas of government in Japan have now given way to modern theories of democracy, but Confucian influence still remains strong in many aspects of Japanese life. The organization of many Japanese business firms, for instance, is clearly influenced by Confucian ideas of benevolence from those on top and obedience and loyalty from those below. However, the sphere in which Confucian influence can most clearly be seen is in the Japanese idea of the family.



One of the most fundamental Confucian teachings is the importance of filial piety—that is, the obedience and loyalty which a son owes his father. Filial piety has been regarded as a virtue in Japan ever since the Great Reform in the seventh century when the civil laws of the time, drawn up on the Chinese model, rated lack of filial piety as a crime second only to treason. During the Tokugawa period, when Confucianism became important politically, the Confucian family system became the official ideal and remained so until the end of World War II.

The Confucian teaching was that, if families were well regulated, the state would be well governed and the whole country would be tranquil and happy. To attain this order and harmony, it was above all necessary that everybody should know his place and inferiors should obey superiors. In the family, the head was the father, and his sons should obey him without question. Among the sons there was also an order of precedence, for younger brothers should obey elder brothers. Last on the list came women, who were considered inferior to men. They were expected to practise a threefold obedience—to their fathers when young, to their husbands when married, and to their eldest son when widowed.

The traditional family pattern is nowadays found mostly in country areas. A family household organized according to this pattern does not consist merely of husband, wife, and children as is usual in Western societies. The family house and property are passed on from the eldest son of one generation to the eldest son of the next and in this main family house up to four generations may be living at the same time: the paternal grandparents, husband (eldest son of generation and now head of the house) and wife, and their eldest son, plus his wife and children. Also, any brothers and sisters of the eldest son will live in the family house until they marry. This kind of household is known as the 'stem' family. Younger sons, after they marry, sometimes set up what is known as a 'branch family'—that is they are given a portion of the family property and set up a separate house, but retain close ties with the main family. As the children of a branch family grow up and marry, the parents can establish their own 'stem' family. The main family house, however, always remains that which is passed on to the eldest son of each generation.

In the traditional 'stem' family, each member had a rôle which carried with it accompanying duties, responsibilities, and sometimes privileges. The 'model' of these traditional rôles was broadly as follows:



*1. Father: The rôle of father carried with it the most power. He was head of the house and wielded almost absolute authority. Indeed, until the end of the last century, disobedience to one's father was punishable by law. This is no longer the case, but the head of the house still controls the family property and his decisions regarding all members of the family are taken very seriously.*



2. *Eldest son:* The eldest son was next in importance, for he succeeded his father as head of the house and assumed the responsibility of the family property. Even when he was a child, his younger brothers and sisters treated him with respect and politely called him 'elder brother'. The position of the eldest son was a much more powerful one in Japan than it ever was in China where, although he was treated with respect, he never assumed automatic control of the family property. When the eldest son married, his wife came to live in the family house. After a male heir was born to the eldest son, the pater-familias handed over the position as head of the house to him and he himself took on the rôle of grandfather.



3. *Younger son:* After he finished his schooling, a younger son helped in the family shop, farm, or business until his marriage. At that time he left the family house and set up his own, often with the financial and other help of his father or elder brother. If his family lived in the country, he might go and look for work in the city. There his household would consist only of himself, his wife and their children, on the pattern of the average household in the West. If a family had enough property, a younger son might set up a 'branch' family.



4. *Daughters:* Even as young children, girls were taught that their position was inferior to that of male members of the family. Boys were served before girls at meal times, and well brought up young girls did not walk in front of a group of boys on their way to school. After they finished school, daughters worked hard in the house, helping with the housework, minding their sister-in-law's children, and working in the fields if the family lived in the country. Eventually, however, a daughter married and went to live with her husband's family. From an economic point of view, they were the least valuable members of the family, because not only did they eventually leave their parent's family, but the parents also had to spend large amounts of money on their wedding celebrations and dowry.



5. *Housewife:* The position of the wife of the head of the family was one that carried with it much work and responsibility and few privileges. The housewife looked after the housework, the cooking and the children, and also worked in the fields. She was the first to rise and the last to go to bed, and she served herself last at meals. One of her jobs was to train her eldest son's wife in the ways of the household,



so that when her own husband retired from the position of head of the house, she would be able to 'hand over the spoon' to her daughter-in-law and retire to the position of grandmother.



6. *Young Wife:* When the eldest son married, his young wife came to live with his family. In fact, she 'married' the whole family and had to learn to get along with it and not merely with her husband. At first, she felt that she was on trial as a new member of the family. Eventually she was accepted into the family and would one day take over the position of housewife from her mother-in-law.



7. *Grandparents:* Life for old people in Japan has always been rather pleasant, for the aged are treated with great affection and respect. According to Confucian teaching, children have a great debt to their parents, to whom they owe their upbringing. Grandparents usually lived with their grown-up families and helped with light chores and minding the children.

In present-day Japan the rigidity of the Confucian pattern has largely disappeared and any family which strictly followed the above model would be considered very old-fashioned, although the influence of Confucian values can still be seen even in very 'modern' families. As in all societies in the world traditional patterns of living break down more readily in the city than in country areas. Very few 'stem' families still exist in Japanese cities, since it is more convenient for people to live near their place of work than with or near the main family. Nowadays the more common pattern in the city is for married couples to live as 'nuclear' families (parents and children only) in apartment blocks. Old people in the cities also often live in this way, rather than with their married children.

An important aspect of the Japanese idea of the family is that it is not thought of as consisting only of its present members. The family stretches back into the past and forward into the future. The most important symbol of this continuity is the tablets of the ancestors. The significance of future descendants is such that, until recently, it was a moral duty not to allow one's family to die out. Even now, if a family has no male heir, the parents very often adopt a younger son from another family and he takes on the position of eldest son in his new family. If a family has a daughter but no son, their daughter's husband is usually adopted as their own son and inherits the family name and property.

One of the most striking features of family life in Japan is the way in which families are regarded as one unit. An Englishman living in Japan once pointed out that, if he were told of a village meeting that 'everyone will be there', it did not mean that every single person living in the village would attend the meeting but merely that every family would be

represented. Furthermore, although the head of the family controls the family property and it is registered under his name, it is regarded as belonging to the whole family. Until the end of the last century, it was even legally registered as such. Only members of the family or very intimate friends call a person by his given name. A young man called Ito Tetsuo will be called Tetsuo, his given name, by his family and close friends. All his other acquaintances, including his colleagues at work, will call him by his family name. They will address him as Ito-san, *san* meaning Mr., Mrs., or Miss. In this way, it is a person's membership of a family that is underlined rather than his individual identity.

#### TOWNS AND CITIES

Since the Meiji reforms, when Japan opened her doors to the West, her rapid development and modernization have made her one of the most industrialized nations of the world. Japan herself, however, is not rich in natural resources. Most of her terrain is mountainous and only 16 per cent of her total land surface is suitable for cultivation. Domestic minerals and industrial raw materials are also in short supply, so that Japanese industry relies heavily on imported raw materials. For this reason, industry is often built up where there is access to deep-water ports and manpower, rather than in the regions where raw materials are found. The result is that the pattern of Japan's industrial development is closely linked with her pattern of urbanization and concentrations of population.

Today nearly two-thirds of Japan's population live within city limits, a city being defined as an urban settlement with 30 000 or more inhabitants. Japan is the seventh most populous nation, and in density of population (653 persons per square mile, or 252 per square kilometre) she ranks fourth in the world. The six largest cities of Japan, Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, Yokohama, Kyoto, and Kobe, all have populations of over a million. Tokyo alone contains ten million people. These six cities all lie along what is known as the urban-industrial axis. It is along this belt, which takes in the deepwater ports on the east coast, and along the shores of the Inland Sea, that industry and urbanization are concentrated. This belt also includes the most fertile and densely populated of the rural areas. This whole region, often called Core Japan, contains some of the world's most densely inhabited regions, where 44 per cent of Japan's total population is contained in only 1 per cent of its total land area.

Towns and cities in Japan are not, however, merely a result of industrialization. Even before the reforms of Meiji in the latter half of the nineteenth century, more than 10 per cent of Japanese lived in cities of 10 000 inhabitants or more. These pre-industrial towns were developments of the 'castle towns' which had grown up around the castles of the great



feudal lords and which, in Tokugawa times, became thriving centres of industry and commerce. The most important towns in the Tokugawa period were the capital, Edo (Tokyo) and Osaka—'the city of merchants'.

In the towns and cities of modern Japan there is much that is similar to the towns and cities of the industrialized West. The standard of living is among the highest in the world. Since the industrial-urban axis includes some of the most fertile farming areas of Japan, most of the outer suburbs of most of the big cities have farm land intermingling with urban housing and factories. Farmers in the city suburbs usually grow vegetables and some grain crops on intensively cultivated land.

Neighbourhood relations are much more formalized in Japan than in most Western countries. Within each ward, people think of themselves as belonging to a 'neighbourhood group', each one consisting of about ten to twenty households. Each group has its own pattern of behaviour to be followed by one member towards another and everyone is expected to adhere to it. Not to do so would be considered extremely rude and unneighbourly. For example, at New Year all the members of the neighbourhood group call on each other and bring a small gift. If someone in the neighbourhood falls ill, a representative from each household calls at the sick person's house and leaves a small gift of food. When there is a death in a family, the neighbours gather round to help with the funeral arrangements and someone from each family brings a gift of 'condolence money' and burns a stick of incense in the home of the deceased. In times of emergency, such as an outbreak of fire, members from each household call on the affected family, bringing a small gift and offering their sympathy. On a happy occasion, such as the birth of a child or a promotion at work, the neighbours again all call and bring a congratulatory gift. All gifts and visits must be properly acknowledged by the receiving family, usually by a return gift of equal or slightly less value, depending on the etiquette of the occasion.

When a new family comes to live in a neighbourhood, the head of the family or his wife calls on all the other families in the neighbourhood to introduce themselves and leave a small gift. After this introduction, the new family is automatically accepted into the neighbourhood group. Their neighbours teach the newcomers the rules of the neighbourhood and this enables them to fit in very quickly. Henceforth all the neighbours will take an interest in the family, call on them at festival times and special occasions and help them when in trouble. The family's closest friends in the neighbourhood, however, will be those families who live in the 'three houses opposite and the one on either side' for it has always been the tradition that one's closest neighbours are also one's closest friends. This rather formalized pattern of neighbourhood relations naturally means a certain loss of privacy for each family. On the other hand, it means that, unlike in the West, loneliness is not a major problem in Japanese cities.



## JAPANESE HOUSES

The business and commercial centres of Japan's cities are little different from those of any other big city, apart from the neon signs and shop notices in Japanese characters, for office buildings, banks and department stores are built in steel and concrete and in the style common to such buildings all over the world. Away from the city centres and large public buildings, however, the architecture in both city and countryside is unmistakably Japanese. Until modern times, the Japanese have always built in wood, partly because of the frequency of typhoons and earthquakes and partly because of the availability of timber and shortage of stone. All the great temples and shrines of Japan are built of wood.

Today many people live in apartment blocks and much urban housing is a mixture of Western-style and traditional Japanese architecture. Many middle-class town houses have a room furnished rather stiffly in western style with sofa and armchairs, where guests are formally received, while the rest of the house may be quite traditional. Apartments and home units, although they may be in Western-style buildings, usually have traditional interiors, for example *tatami* covered floors.

The exterior of a Japanese house is never painted. Indeed when a house is newly built and the timber still new and yellow, people consider it very ugly and anxiously wait for wind and rain to weather it to a soft grey-brown that harmonizes with the surrounding earth. The interiors of traditional Japanese houses, although they may differ in their basic ground plan, always have certain features in common. The entrance, kitchen and bathroom area are floored with wood, cement or beaten earth. The floor of the rest of the house, where the family lives, eats and sleeps, is covered with *tatami* mats. Each *tatami* is three feet by six feet (or 1.7 square metres) and the size of a room is always measured by the number of mats in it. For example, a family living in an apartment block might say 'We live in a six mat room'. Shoes are never worn on the *tatami*. People always remove their shoes at the entrance and put on scuffs, a supply of which is kept at the entrance for guests and members of the family alike. Rooms are separated from each other by light, sliding panels called *shōji*. By sliding these panels back, the rooms can be opened into each other to accommodate a large number of guests on special occasions, such as weddings. One room is generally thought of as the most formal in the house, and here guests are entertained. In this room is found the *tokonoma*, a decorative alcove where there is hung a piece of calligraphy or a scroll, and where perhaps a flower arrangement is placed. Another room, usually off the kitchen, is where the family always gathers, sitting on the floor around the low square table where they eat or read. It is in this room that the television set is found. The colours inside a Japanese house are always quiet shades of brown and yellow that harmonize with the natural colour of the *tatami* and the woodwork. There is a minimum of furniture—little is needed, since people sleep and sit



on the *tatami*. Simplicity and harmony are the keynotes of a Japanese house. Any room can serve as a bedroom, since beds are simply padded quilts that are rolled up and put away during the daytime and spread out on the *tatami* at night. Around the outer edge of the main living area is a narrow verandah of polished wood, surrounded by wooden shutters which are closed at night and opened during the day.

The bath is a feature of Japanese life that cannot go unmentioned, for bathing is something of a ritual among the Japanese. This is due to the



Wooden bathtub.

centuries-old influence of Shintō beliefs about bodily cleanliness. The bath is a high, square wooden tub, heated underneath to near scalding. A person taking a bath washes himself first *outside* the tub and only climbs into it to rinse the soap off. In this way, one filling of bath water serves for a number of people and so saves both water and fuel. Most town houses and apartments do not have their own bathrooms. Instead people go to a nearby public bath house where they can have a bath very cheaply. These public bath houses are also time-honoured places for gossiping with friends.

#### THE VILLAGES

Although Japan is undoubtedly the most urbanized of the East Asian countries, nearly 30 per cent of her population live in rural areas and the

overwhelming majority of these live in small, rice-growing communities. The fact that there is a shortage of arable land in Japan means that, where the land is suitable for cultivation, the rural population is densely concentrated and landholdings are small, averaging only two and a half acres (or one hectare) per family. The best arable land is found in the three great plains at the head of the Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka Bays in the area of Core Japan. The density of the rural population in this region is the highest for any rural area, not merely in Japan but in the world.

Modernization and industrialization have brought about great changes in rural life and have also done much to break down the traditional gap between townspeople and peasants. Today, television aerials can be seen in remote village areas, and gas and electric household appliances are appearing in peasant homesteads. Even more significant is the drop in farm population as many people move to the cities in search of work. In 1950 the farm population numbered 37.8 million. In 1965 it had dropped to 11.5 million, although production had actually risen. The explanation for this lies in the increased use of small-scale farm machinery since the war. This reduces the amount of human labour needed and makes it possible for members of farm households to spend part of their time on non-agricultural work. Since two-thirds of Japan's population live within city limits most villages are within easy reach of a bus or train that will take them to work in an office or factory in the nearby city. A common practice in rural villages in the areas near cities is for the husband to commute to work in the city during the week, leaving the womenfolk and the children to tend the fields. At the weekend he does the heavy farm work with the aid of machinery, such as a small tractor.

By far the most important crop grown in Japan is rice. In 1960, 56 per cent of the cultivated land was used for growing rice. One of the chief reasons for its popularity is that rice is a high-yield crop, and hence the most economical to grow in a country where land is so scarce. Rice is grown mainly in the south and most intensively in the Core region. Further north more 'dry' crops, such as wheat, barley or legumes, which do not require irrigated fields, are grown. In Hokkaido, the northernmost province of Japan, there is little wet-rice cultivation. The land here is used mainly either for dry crops or pasture. Most of Japan's dairy farms are found in this region. Because the climate is less suitable for rice cultivation, Hokkaido is much less densely populated than southern Japan and farms are larger, the average size being twelve and a half acres (or five hectares).

Another feature of Japanese agriculture, and a direct result of the shortage of arable land, is the practice of multiple cropping. In the south of Japan, one-third of the farmland is double-cropped. Where dry fields are double-cropped, a summer crop of vegetables is followed by a winter crop of wheat, barley or legumes. Paddy fields are usually drained after the rice is harvested in October or November and planted with wheat, barley, rape, beans or legumes.



The practice of multiple cropping is carried out especially in the Core region, where the land is more fertile and more intensely cultivated than anywhere else in the world. Each tiny field is looked after like a garden—even fertilizer is applied to the base of each plant individually. In some regions in Core Japan it is even possible to grow two crops of rice in a single field in one year, which is probably the most intensive form of agriculture ever practised in any country. Even where dry crops are planted after the harvest of rice in the autumn, the field is often made to produce four different winter crops. Fast-maturing plants, such as radishes, may be planted on the ridges while the threshing and polishing of the rice crop is still in progress. These are harvested when the main winter crop of wheat or barley is planted. Meanwhile, another crop, such as eggplant, may be ripening in the furrows, and it will be followed by another vegetable crop while the grain crop is ripening.

Such intensive methods of agriculture would not be possible were it not for the suitability of the climate, an abundant rainfall, elaborate irrigation networks, and the presence of plentiful human labour. Not only do all the members of a farm household share the work on the land but also the whole village community co-operates in the management of the network of canals and ditches that irrigate the paddy fields.

As might be expected, it is in the rural areas that traditional ways of life are most likely to persist. For example, the traditional stem family is more likely to be found in the country than in the towns and cities because, on the farm, the whole household is involved in working the land and many hands are needed.

In a typical farm household in Core Japan, all the adult women work in the fields. Grandmother's main job is minding the children, but she may also do some weeding. The housewife and son's wife help in the fields and also carry on some part-time activity like weaving rush mats for sale. Usually the men of the household look after the paddy fields, where the cash crop, rice, is grown, while the women look after the dry fields which produce vegetables and grains such as millet or barley. These are mainly for the family's own consumption.

The farm houses and outbuildings are not surrounded by their land, as they would be in a European farm, but are clustered closely together in a village, so that buildings take up the least possible amount of the precious land. The land around the village is divided into small plots, each about one-tenth to one-quarter of an acre (400-1 000 square metres) in size. Some of the plots are wet paddy fields, others are dry plots for growing cereals other than rice and vegetables. An average farming household owns about ten to twenty of these plots, which are scattered so that everybody owns some paddy fields. Each small plot is marked off from the others by a raised margin of beaten earth. Any spare land between the fields or buildings is used for odd crops of vegetables or for growing fruit trees, such as mulberry for silkworm cultivation. If there is a wooded hill nearby, the

trees on it are divided into wood lots from which the villages take their fuel.

A typical farmhouse in Core Japan is built of wattle and clay daub with a thatched roof. It is usually single-storied, but has a large attic. It is often enclosed by a wall on three sides, the house itself forming the back



Peasant house.

wall. Along the east wall, at right angles to the house, are the outhouses—the bathroom and workrooms for mat-weaving or storing tools and the family plough-ox. There may also be a storehouse in the northwest corner, although stores of grain and household valuables are usually kept in the attic. The interior of the farmhouse is similar to that of any other Japanese house.

Most farmhouses in Japan are still built according to the traditional beliefs concerning the 'rules of direction' (*hōgaku*). According to these, each house is pictured as lying on a circle of the zodiac, with the mid-point of the house as the centre of the circle. Every place in the yard and the house is then considered to be lucky or unlucky according to where it lies on the zodiacal circle. Bad fortune is believed to flow from the north-east to the south-west, so a space is left open in these directions to let evil spirits escape again should they enter the farmhouse area. Storehouses and wells are never built in the southern corner of the yard, for fear that the storehouse might burn down or the well dry up. On the other hand, good fortune flows from south-east to north-west, so a storehouse is built in the north-west corner to ensure an abundant income. There are many of these ancient superstitions and they still have some influence today, although more from custom and habit than actual belief.

The annual cycle of work and holidays is often quite different in the country and city. In the villages, periods of activity or rest are determined by the seasons, and a national public holiday celebrated in the cities is ignored in the countryside if it conflicts with a busy period of planting or



harvesting. Village communities often follow the old lunar calendar, rather than the Western solar calendar, because the lunar calendar is drawn up on the basis of the agricultural year, with ceremonies and festivals designed to fit in with seasonal activities. For example, New Year, one of the main national holidays in Japan, is observed one month later in the country than in the city. This is because people in the country celebrate New Year according to the lunar calendar, where it falls in February, when the harvest and replanting are completed, instead of in January when the work is at its height.

## NOTE ON THE PRONUNCIATION OF JAPANESE

There is virtually no stress in a Japanese word—all syllables are pronounced with equal force and given equal length. Syllables normally consist of a vowel or a consonant followed by a vowel, e.g. Ka-ma-ku-ra. *Ai* (pronounced 'eye') and *ei* (pronounced like the *a* in 'ale') are diphthongs, e.g., sa-mu-rai (pronounced sa-mu-rye) and Hei-an (pronounced Hay-un). Other vowels coming together are pronounced as separate syllables, e.g., O-ki-na-wa, I-e-ya-su. Long and short vowels (*ō* and *ū*) are formed like the corresponding short vowels (*o* and *u*) but are held much longer. The basic vowel sounds are pronounced as follows:

*a* as in *father*

*e* as in *end*

*i* as the first *e* in *eve*

*o* as in *obey*

*u* as in *rude*

Consonants and the semi-vowels *w* and *y* are generally pronounced as they are in English.



## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

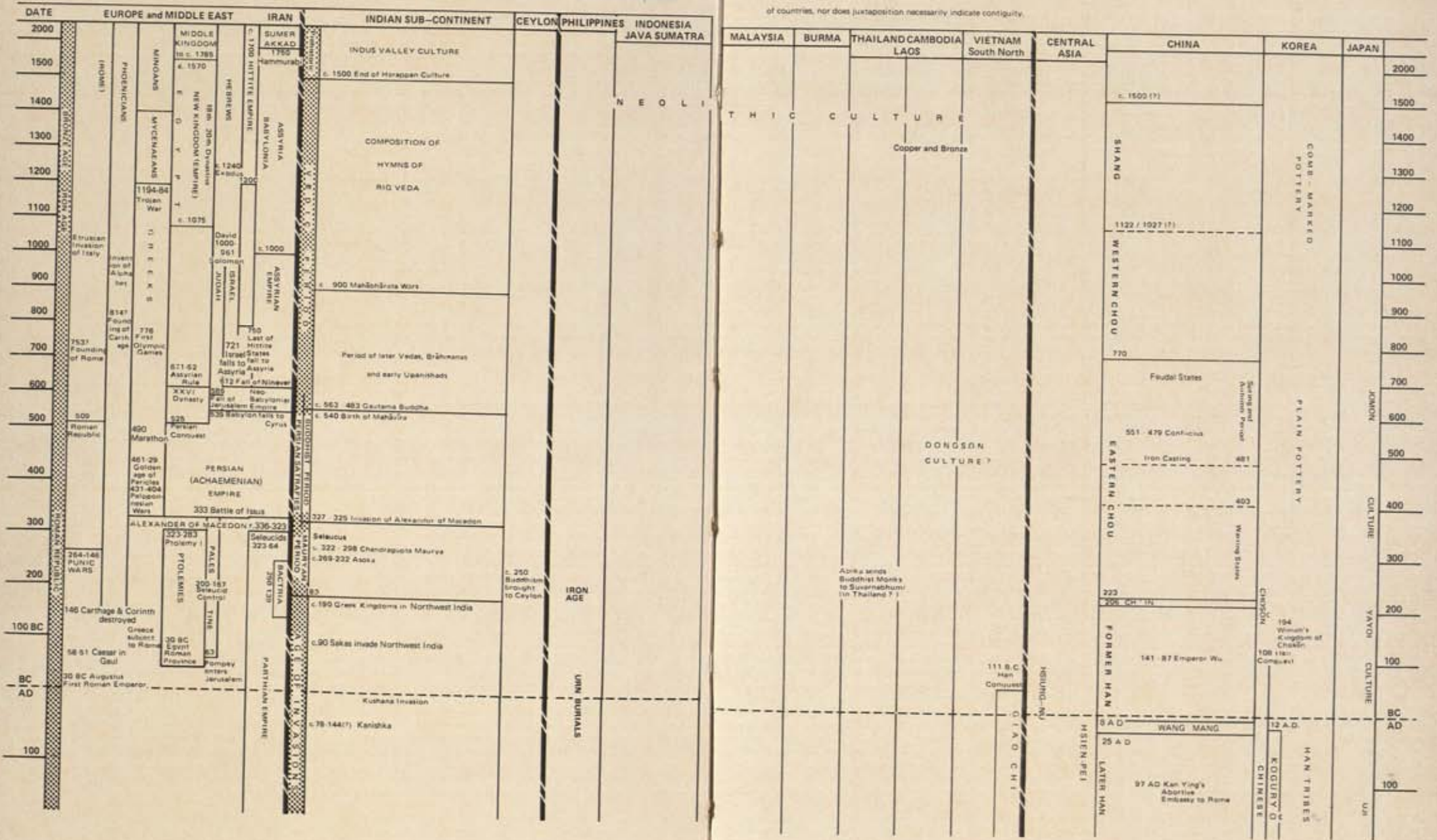
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